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BENGALI HOUSEHOLD TALES



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BENGALI HOUSEHOLD TALES

COLLECTED AND TRANSLATED

BY THE REV.

WILLIAM McCULLOCH

FORMERLY MISSIONARY OF THE UNITED FREE CHURCH IN
LOWER BENGAL

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PREFACE

THE Tales, forming this book, have been selected from amongst a large number which I collected upwards of twenty-five years ago. Nos. IV., VII., XXI., and XXII., and, possibly, one or two others, have appeared in the Calcutta *Englishman*, to the proprietors of which I am indebted for permission to republish them, and Nos. I., II., and V. were included in an article on "Fate" I contributed to the Madras *Christian College Magazine*. None of the rest, so far as I know, have as yet been published in English. Nearly all those in Mr. Day's collection were narrated to me in one form or another, but I have excluded from this selection any of my own gathering which seemed to be mere variants of stories in his book.

The Narrator of the greater part of the Tales I gathered, was a very intelligent young Brahman, an orthodox Hindu, whose home was in an extremely out-of-the-way village, and who, when I first became acquainted with him, had been little in contact with Europeans. He possessed fine gifts, both as a talker and a *raconteur*. Yet I found no reason to doubt his often-repeated assertion that he told me the stories exactly as he had heard them. For one

thing, his stories varied widely in quality, some of them being both coarse and dull, whereas he, himself, was of a decidedly refined and distinguished type of mind, and was, besides, quite competent, when he let himself go, to make a good story of almost anything by his way of telling it. Moreover, I was able to ascertain that he did not improvise but narrated his Tales in stereotyped form, by getting him to re-tell many of them in Sanskrit, which he spoke fluently, a considerable time after he had first told them in Bengali. The two versions, in every case, corresponded as closely as possible.

All the stories in my collection were written down in shorthand *verbatim* as narrated to me. In translating them, I have made no attempt to improve them into literature, but have tried simply to reproduce the sense of the originals in ordinary conversational English. In one or two instances, where Western taste necessitated some slight modification, literal renderings have been appended below in Latin.

The Notes are intended for the general reader, not for experts in matters Indian or in Folk-lore, for whom I do not profess to be qualified to write.

W. McCULLOCH.

TRINITY, EDINBURGH.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES

CAS	. 'Santal Folk-Tales,' by A. Campbell, D.D.
CLER	. 'Eastern Romances and Stories,' by W. A. Clouston.
CLP	. 'Popular Tales and Fictions,' by W. A. Clouston.
FOD	. 'Old Deccan Days,' by M. Frere.
GHT	. 'Grimm's Household Tales,' tr. by Mrs. Hunt.
GOS	. 'Sicilianische Märchen,' gesammelt von L. Gontzenbach.
HGA	. 'Griechische und Albanesische Märchen,' gesammelt von J. G. v. Hahn.
HSF	. 'The Science of Fairy Tales,' by S. Hartland.
KKT	. 'Folk-Tales of Kashmir,' by the Rev. J. Hinton Knowles.
KRS	. 'Sagen und Märchen der Südslaven,' von F. S. Krauss.
KSS	. 'Kathá-sarit-ságara,' tr. by C. H. Tawney.
LDB	. 'Folk-Tales of Bengal,' by the Rev. L. B. Day.
MBH	. 'Mahábhárata.'
MCF	. 'The Childhood of Fiction,' by J. A. Macculloch.
MWR	. 'Religious Thought and Life in India,' by Monier Williams.
RRT	. 'Russian Folk-Tales,' by W. R. S. Ralston.
SIF	. 'Indian Fairy Tales,' by M. Stokes.
Sk.	. Sanskrit.
STT	. 'Tibetan Tales,' by F. Anton v. Schiefner, tr. by W. R. S. Ralston.
TYT	. 'Yule-tide Stories,' by Benjamin Thorpe.

I.

KARMASŪTRA.¹

ONCE upon a time, in a certain village, there lived a Bhaṭṭāchārya ² Brahman. He possessed a son, a daughter, a wife, and a cow, and was a very learned man. One night, he was lying awake, when everybody else in the house was sound asleep. All at once, he happened to notice a thread hanging down from one of the rafters. While he looked at it, it grew longer and thicker, till, at length, he saw that it was not a thread, but a huge snake.³ Immediately on his seeing the snake, he sprang up in alarm, but, while he was in the very act of rousing his wife and children, the snake bit all three of them, and they died the same moment that they were bitten. Then the snake glided quickly away.

In great grief and agitation, the Brahman said

¹ See Appendix, Note 1. On the irresistible power of *Karma*, i.e., the inevitableness of fate, cf. KKT, 326 ff.

² Lit. a revered teacher. The students of the *ṭōls*—native institutions for the study of Sk. literature—address their teachers as Bh. The word is used as their family surname by the highest of the Kulin Brahman sects in Bengal. The proper occupation of a Bh. is that of pundit or of family priest to high-caste people.

³ Cf. LDB, p. 101. In the dead of night, an almost invisible thread comes out of Swet Basanta's wife's left nostril and thickens into a huge snake. Also, KKT, pp. 421 ff. A deadly black snake descends from the sky to slay the sleeping king.

to himself : “ What shall I gain by remaining here any longer ? ” So saying, he went off in the same direction as the snake had gone. As soon as he was outside of the house, he saw the snake making for the cow-shed. The Brahman hurried after it. When he got to the shed, no snake was to be seen, but a huge tiger bounded past him, carrying off the cow.

In great fear, the Brahman now left his house altogether, and set out to go to the forest.⁴ Just as he was coming near the skirts of it, day dawned. The Brahman, worn out with grief and with walking most of the night, now lay down to sleep at the foot of a tree. A little while after, he awoke, and saw, standing before him, a Brahman. Looking up at him, he asked, “ Who are you ? ” The old man, in turn, asked him, “ Who are you ? ” The Brahman answered, “ I am so-and-so. Being in great grief because, last night, my wife and children were killed by a snake and my cow carried off by a tiger, I have left my house and wandered hither. But who are you ? ” The aged Brahman answered, “ I am that snake and that tiger.” Hearing this, the Brahman started up and said, “ Then, how are you now a Brahman ? What is your name ? ” The stranger answered, “ My name is Karmasūtra. I appear in various shapes, and roam about all over the world. Whatever kind of death is to befall each man, I bring it about.” Then the Brahman said, “ My son, daughter, wife, and cow—you killed them all. Why did you not kill me too ? ” Karmasūtra answered, “ Your death is not to be in that way. In the water of the Ganges, where it is deep enough to reach your

⁴ *Viz.*, to abandon the world and lead the life of an ascetic.

neck, your death will take place. There, an alligator will carry you off." Saying this, the aged Brahman disappeared. The other determined to set out at once, and not to stop travelling till he should come to a country where there was no lake or river at all. For two or three months, he journeyed on, and, at length, arrived at a great city. There a powerful Raja dwelt. It happened that, on the very day the Brahman arrived, a great festival was being held in that Raja's house. Now, from the time he commenced his travels, the Brahman had never enjoyed even one good meal.⁵ In the hope that, here, at last, he would get one, the Brahman went to the Raja's palace, and stayed there as a guest. The Raja paid him all due respect, and ordered his servants to make ready food for him. The command was no sooner given than everything was ready, and the Brahman, having bathed and performed his daily devotions, went away to cook his food.⁶

It happened that, at that time, a great many very holy pundits were gathered together in the palace. In their assembly, various scriptures were being discussed. The newly-come Brahman, being, himself, a very learned man and hearing a scriptural discussion going on, left his cooking, and began to

⁵ A serious matter for a professional Bhaṭṭāchārya, with whom attendance at feasts—where a big feed of dainties as well as a *dakshinā* or donation is obtained—is one of the chief businesses of life.

⁶ *Viz.*, his rice. Sweetmeats, etc., prepared by a *modōk* or *moira* he could eat, but not rice, cooked by a person of low caste. Now-a-days, well-to-do Bengalis often keep Brahman cooks, so as to be able to show hospitality to people of any caste, however high.

take part in it. In a very short time, he vanquished all the others in argument, and gained the first place in the assembly. So greatly was the Raja delighted with his learning that he appointed him to be his own court-pundit.⁷

For a time, the Brahman lived there in the greatest happiness. Not very long after he came, a son was born to the Raja. The Raja put the boy under the care of the court-pundit, and, within a short time, the pundit had instructed him in many sciences.⁸ When the prince reached the age of thirteen or fourteen, the Raja took it into his head to remove with his court to the banks of the Ganges. On hearing this, the Brahman came to him, and said, "Mōharaj, if you are going to live on the banks of the Ganges, then allow me to depart. For I am resolved not to go near the banks of the Ganges." The Raja, much surprised, asked, "What is your reason?" Then the Brahman said, "Mōharaj, I am sure to lose my life if I go to the banks of the Ganges, therefore I will not go there." When the Raja heard this, he began to hesitate a little, but the prince cried, "If the Brahman does not go, then I will not go; he must be taken along with us." So the Raja said to the Brahman, "Do come, reverend sir;

⁷ A somewhat satirical account of the King of Gaur's court-pundit will be found in B. C. Chatterji's 'Mṛiṇalīnī,' pp. 42 ff. See also, No. IX, p. 92.

⁸ In the Introduction to the 'Hitopadeśa,' Viṣṇuśarman undertakes to teach the princes Policy in six months. Twelve years is the period allotted by rule to Grammar, "the gate to all knowledge." Śarvavarman offers to make King Sātavāhana master of it in six months, and, by the grace of the god Kārttikeya, is enabled to keep his word—KSS, I, pp. 39 f.

there, I will do whatever you wish." The Brahman, seeing there was no help for it, agreed to go along with the Raja and his court.

When they arrived at the Ganges, the Raja caused a splendid palace to be built on the river-bank. There he lived for some time in great happiness along with all his family and court. The young prince was passionately fond of his Brahman tutor. Wherever he went, he would have the Brahman to accompany him ; otherwise, he could in no way be persuaded to go anywhere. One day, he said to the Raja, "Father, I wish to bathe in the Ganges." "Very well," replied his father, "you may do so"; and, at once, he gave orders to his servants to conduct the prince to the Ganges that he might bathe. Everything was got ready, and the company was just about to set off, when the prince saw that the Brahman was not among his attendants. He at once went to the Raja and said, "Unless the Brahman goes with me, I will not bathe in the Ganges." The Raja sent to call the Brahman, and, when he came, told him to go along with his son to bathe in the Ganges. The Brahman answered, "Möharaj, I have already said that I will not go into the water of the Ganges, for, if I do so, an alligator will devour me." The Raja then said to the prince, "Go you and bathe alone." But the boy would not hear of going, unless the Brahman went with him. Still the latter was unwilling to go, and still the prince insisted that he should. At length, the Raja said, "Reverend sir, pray go ; I will provide against all danger." Saying this, he gave orders to his servants to surround with a net the place where

his son and the Brahman were to bathe, and to stand ready with their weapons, in great numbers, both on the land and in the water. He commanded them, also, to form a ring all round the Brahman, when he went down into the river.⁹

The Raja's orders were at once carried out, and then the prince and the Brahman went down to the water, and entered it where it was very shallow. The attendants stood all around, as the Raja had commanded. Gradually, the Brahman's fear passed off,¹⁰ and, at length, little by little, he went farther and farther in, till the water reached up to his neck. Instantly upon this, the boy said to him, "Ṭhākur, I am no prince ; I am Karmasūtra !" Still saying this, he took the form of an alligator, and, seizing the Brahman, went off with him in a moment.

⁹ But all in vain. For, "however well guarded, what is smitten by Fate, perishes"—'Hitop.' II, 18.

¹⁰ He forgot the need of caution. For, "when disaster has drawn nigh, the minds of men often become obscured"—'Hitop.' I, 27. But no care would have availed now. For "when Fate descends, caution is in vain"—'Anwāri Suhailī,' I, 19, quoted in CLER, p. 566. "*Niyatiḥ kena bādhyate*"—who (or what) can resist Fate?—is a very common expression of condolence with a friend in Bengal, when a dear relative has died. It is the ending of a Sk. *śloka* :

"Mātulo yasya Govindah, pitā yasya Dhananjayah,
So' bhimanyū raṇe śete, niyatiḥ kena bādhyate."

"Though Kṛishṇa was his uncle, and Arjuna, his father,
Yet Abhimanyu lies low on the battlefield. Who can resist
Fate ?"

II.

THE BRAHMAN AND THE KĀYASTHA.¹

IN a certain village, there once lived a Brahman and a Kāyastha. The Brahman was very religious, truthful, and just. He would never do any work whatever, without, first of all, offering the daily worship enjoined by the Śāstras. The Kāyastha, on the other hand, was a most impious and wicked man. He was always in some way or other mocking at the Brahman. He would say to him, "You do pious works, and yet can get nothing to eat. But, look here ; I drink and do all kinds of wicked deeds, and yet I want for nothing." The Brahman bore all his taunts, without answering him one word.

One day, the Brahman happened to go to bathe in the Ganges. While he was bathing, a sharp stake ran into his foot, and much blood began to flow. He would have fallen down, but many people, crowding round, held him up, and led him out of the water. Then the poor Brahman, with great

¹ Kāyasthas, variously described in the Śāstras as Kshatriyas and as Sūdras, appear to have been originally the clerk and accountant class. In the Bengal of to-day, they form a numerous, highly respectable and advanced community, able to admit themselves to be Sūdras without much disadvantage, since, except in point of formal caste, they are quite abreast of the Brahmans. See J. N. Bhattacharjee, 'Hindu Castes and Sects,' pp. 175 ff.

pain and difficulty, began to try to make his way home. At that very time, the Kāyastha chanced to pass along that way, and met with the Brahman. When he heard of his misfortune, he said, "See here; your life is most holy and pious; you diligently perform all religious ceremonies; and yet, to-day, you have all but met your death; while I, this same day, have found this bag of gold coins. Which way of life is the more profitable, then, yours or mine?"

They were still talking, when an astrologer chanced to come up. They both asked him what was the cause of their strange fates. Then the astrologer, having by careful reckoning ascertained the truth, said: "Brahman, in a former life, you were a great sinner. You were guilty of Brahman-murder, cow-murder, and many suchlike awful crimes. Accordingly, it was ordained in your destiny that, to-day, you should be impaled. But, in this life, you have done, and are always doing many holy deeds; therefore, instead of impalement, you have suffered only this punishment to-day. And you, Kāyastha, in a former life, were exceedingly pious. You did many holy and righteous deeds; and, as a reward for all those, you were to have been made a Raja to-day. But, in this life, you have done, and are still doing wicked deeds without number; therefore, instead of being made a Raja, you have got only that bag of gold pieces which you found to-day."² The Brahman and the Kāyastha, having heard the words of the astrologer, returned to their homes.

² See Appendix, Note 2.

III.

THE BRAHMAN'S LUCK.

ONCE on a time, there was a very poor but uncommonly learned Brahman. He had studied all the Śāstras, till he was profoundly versed in them, but had no means whatever of earning a livelihood. His wife was constantly saying to him, "Bāmon,¹ your books of astrology and suchlike rubbish are never out of your hands, day or night; but you never once consider how people's stomachs are to be kept going." "Brāmhōṇī,"² he used to reply, "what good will my considering do? If the Giver does not give, all my efforts will be in vain. And, more than that. At present, I'm under the influence of Shōni.³ So there's not the slightest possibility

¹ Vulgar colloquial for *Brāmhōṇ*, as Bengalis pronounce the Sk. *Brāhmaṇa*.

² So Bengalis pronounce Sk. *Brāhmaṇī*. Hindu husband and wife never address each other by name. The wife will, on no account, even speak of her husband by name.

³ The planet, Saturn, Sk., *Śani*. He is called *Krūra-dṛiś* and *Krūra-lochana*, "the malignant-eyed," because his influence is more disastrous than that of any other planet. See LDB, p. 108 ff., 'The Evil Eye of Sani'; he casts his eye on Sribatsa for three years, and, during that time, Lakshmī, the goddess of good fortune, with all the will in the world, is almost powerless to help him. Cf. CLER, p. 231: "The entrance of Saturn into the Brahman's horoscope turned everything upside-down." It has to be remem-

of my securing an income anywhere. On the contrary, whatever I take in hand, bad luck is sure to dog my steps." "Don't speak to me about your books of astrology and your Shōnis," his wife would retort. "You're too lazy to be willing to stir out of the house. That's why you can earn nothing." Then the Brahman would say, "You're only a foolish woman. So it's natural for you to think in that way. You don't look to the future. If only you can be comfortable for the present, you think nothing more is needful. So it's useless to argue with you about such things. Of course, as you're my wife, it's my duty to support you, and, naturally, you can't help feeling aggrieved, when you have to suffer want; I don't blame you for that. But what can I do?" "What can you do?" rejoined the Brāhmaṇī on one occasion. "Surely there's no lack of Rajas in this country, and many of them are open-handed enough. Can't you go to some of them, and see what's to be got?" "It won't be of the slightest use," said the Brahman. "Even if they treat me with all due respect—nay, lay themselves out to show quite exceptional regard for me—I shan't be a single pice the better off for all that. I've made a reckoning by the stars, and know for certain that there's another six months' poverty and hardship before me." ⁴ "Confound your reckon-

bered that the planets are regarded as personal beings—"mächtige Herrscher," as Gunkel calls them. See CLER, p. 264, Note; also, p. 374.

⁴ Cf. Shah Manssur, who is persistently unlucky till his luck changes once for all. CLER, pp. 12-45. Also, Sadullah, to whom Kasharkasha gives only trifling help again and again, until what befalls him in connection with that, shows that his luck

ings and you too," cried his wife. "Believing those astrological books of yours, you'll sit still for another six months, will you? And then, I daresay, you'll just have to go out and fetch home a shipful of riches to the *ghat*!"⁵ This was rather more than the Brahman could stand. He got up in a huff and said, "Very well. I'll go at once. You'll see how much'll come of it."

So he got his old, shabby clothes well washed, and started off for the nearest Raja's palace. He was an old man, and there was a long way to go. It took him some four days to reach the place. The Raja was just going out to bathe, when the Brahman appeared, and gave him his blessing. He received the old man with the utmost respect, requested him to be seated, and asked, "Thākur, to what do I owe the honour of this visit?" The Brahman answered in verse to this effect: "Your Majesty, I am come to lay a complaint before you. Constrained by your mighty power, poverty and distress have fled from your city, hotly pursued by your munificence, which has followed close at their heels, like an officer of justice. In mortal terror of him, and finding no other refuge, the criminals have hidden themselves in my humble cottage. I have,

has turned—*ib.*, pp. 94 ff. Cf. *ib.*, pp. 109, 112, and 480 ff., specially 481 f. "Misfortunes are contagious," says the king. "I had heard of your ill-luck and dared not receive you into my palace again, fearing that your ill-luck should affect me and put it out of my power to assist you when your star should look more favourably on you." See, also, the story of Shoayb; *ib.*, p. 129. That is the case of a man whose ill-luck persists to the end. With it, cf. RRT, pp. 197 ff.

⁵ Landing-place, or steps down to a river or tank for bathers.

therefore, come to-day to inform your Majesty." The Brahman's words surprised and delighted the Raja beyond measure. "Thākur," said he, "many Brahman pundits visit me, but not one of them have I ever heard recite such beautiful verses. I'm filled with admiration of your learning and cleverness. What sort of present is fit to be given to such a man as you?" Now, the Raja happened, as has been said, to be on the point of going to bathe, and so was holding in his hands the big and little copper pots for making libations of water to the spirits of his dead parents.⁶ A happy thought struck him. He held out the two pots to the Brahman, and said, "Thākur, take these. They're the things I, myself, use. I can't think of any other gift befitting such talents and accomplishments as yours." The Brahman was dumbfounded. "Hōribōl Hōri!"⁷ said he to himself. "Didn't I tell the Brāmhōnī over and over again that, do what

⁶ This is the kind of *Śrāddha*—rite performed for the benefit of a deceased parent or ancestor after he has become invested with his intermediate body—called *nitya*, i.e., daily or regular. See MWR, pp. 274 ff., 303 ff.

⁷ "Say, *Hari, Hari!*" Sk. *Hari* is one of the names of Vishṇu, popularly etymologized to mean "the remover of sin"—and, therefore, of calamity. "*Hōribōl Hōri!*" is a very common ejaculation when anything disastrous or disappointing happens. The bearers keep repeating it, when taking a corpse to the burning-ghat. So a man says, "*Radhe-Madhob!*" or "*Ram! Ram!*" when anything he disapproves is proposed to him, and on similar occasions. Such "repetitions" of a divine name are by no means "vain." The mere sound possesses a wonderful efficacy. Thus a robber-captain is said to have attained salvation at death, because, when professionally employed, he used constantly to shout "*Mar, mar!*"—i.e., "Strike, strike!"—to his men—*mar* being only *Ram* inverted.

I might just now, I should only have my labour for my pains? But the hussy wouldn't listen to me. And, now, how's an old man like me to make that four days' journey home? How am I to get food on the way?" Revolving all this in his mind, he gave the Raja his blessing, and took his departure.

With no small difficulty and hardship, the Brahman managed to make his way back to his home, where his wife was looking out for him in a state of high hope and expectation. What splendid gifts would he not bring? "Well, how did you get on? What have you got?" was her greeting to her husband, as soon as he appeared. "What have I got?" he retorted. "I've got more than enough. You'll not need to want any more for food and clothing." "Why, what has happened?" she asked. "What else should happen?" said he. "I've got such a grand gift as the Raja would give to no other man. I've received the very highest honour he could confer on me. And"—holding out the pots—"this is what it all amounts to." It was too much. For once in her life, even the Brāhmaṇī could find nothing to say adequate to the occasion.

Some weeks passed. The Brāhmaṇī's spirit gradually revived, and she began again, "Though you didn't get anything the very first place you went to, that is no sort of reason why you shouldn't try somewhere else. People have got to make one effort after another, dear knows how often. If, positively, everything possible has been done, yet nothing has come of it all, then, of course, it's plain that Fate's against them."⁸ "There you are at

⁸ "Lakshmi comes to the lion-like man who exerts himself; it

your nagging again," said the Brahman. "How often am I to explain to you that, for the present, my destiny contains nothing good—nothing but fruitless labour?" "Oh," she replied, "you go just once again—just once. I hear that, in yonder country, there's a Raja whose generosity is unbounded, and there's nobody he shows such favour to as Brahman pundits. You pay him a visit. Something good is sure to come of it, and we shall be relieved of our poverty once for all." Her husband said, "Brāmhōṇī, you're an incorrigible fool. But, as your one aim in life is to make me take fruitless trouble, there's nothing for me but to go."

Once more, the Brahman's old *dhuti* and *chhadōr*⁹ got a good washing; then, taking a palmyra-leaf umbrella and a bamboo staff, he began his journey. After several days' severe toil and hardship, he arrived at the palace. It was a building of huge size, with a lofty lion-gateway,¹⁰ before which many is poltroons who say 'Fate must give.' Striking down Fate, act manfully in thine own strength. When an effort has been made, if success does not follow, there is, then, no blame"—'Hitop.', Introd., 31. "Works are accomplished by exertion, not by wishes; deer, assuredly, do not enter the mouth of the lion when he is asleep"—*ib.*, Introd., 36. Cf. *ib.*, II, 4; also, CLER, pp. 121 ff. and 137. The king declares his view that good fortune depends on character, wisdom, and diligence; but, what happens in the case of Shoayb, convinces him that he has been mistaken.

⁹ A Bengali's usual dress consists of the *dhuti*—a long strip of muslin, wound round the limbs and waist—the *piryan*—a white cotton shirt—and the *chhadōr*—an oblong piece of muslin, which may be worn scarf-wise over the shoulders or wrapped round the upper part of the body. Old-fashioned villagers wear only the first and the last.

¹⁰ Sk., *siṅhadvāra*. Cf. *siṅhāsana* = throne. Formerly, the main entrance to a palace and the king's seat in his darbār hall were always adorned with figures of lions.

armed sepoy were standing on guard. Nobody could enter but by their leave. When the Brahman tried to do so, he got such a push back that he fell sprawling on the ground.¹¹ He painfully picked himself up again, and said to the man that had pushed him, "Sir Sepoy, please let me pass; I must get audience of the Raja." "A seedy old dotard like you get admission to the Raja!" was the reply. "You just clear out, and look sharp about it." The Brahman said, "I'm a Brahman, and, though I'm poor, I'm not a dotard. Have the kindness to let me pass." But the sepoy would not listen, and only made fun of him. He was sitting there in great distress, quite at a loss what to do, when an old durwan¹² chanced to come out of the palace. The Brahman told him all his story. Feeling rather sorry for him, the old durwan said, "Well, Thākur, you wait here. I'll go and tell the Raja. He has given strict orders that nobody is to be admitted to his presence without being announced." "Very good," was the reply. "You go and tell the Raja. I'll wait here till you come back." The old durwan went inside and said to the Raja, "Your Majesty, a Brahman is seeking admission to your presence." "A Brahman? Then fetch him in at once," answered the Raja. "And take good care that not the slightest disrespect is shown him."

¹¹ The story seems to assume that the sepoy were Musalmans. They are represented as speaking Musalmāni Bengali. Hence, their disrespectful treatment of the Brahman. Contrast the Hindu king's behaviour.

¹² Durwans—gatekeepers—in Bengal, are often up-country Brahmans. Such are, of course, regarded as much lower in caste than Bhattacharjis and the like.

In obedience to the Raja's command, the old durwan went to the lion-gate, and called to the Brahman, "Come along, *Ṭhākur*, come along." The Brahman, gathering up his umbrella and staff, was on the point of entering, when one of the sepoy's called out, "You mustn't take all that trash with you." The poor Brahman, shaking with fear, set down his umbrella and staff at the gate, and then followed the durwan into the Raja's presence.

As soon as he saw the Brahman enter his hall of audience, the Raja jumped up from his throne, and, when he approached, prostrated himself before him,¹³ and then gave him a seat in an honourable place. When the Brahman was seated, the Raja asked him, "*Ṭhākur*, do you carry on any business?" "Yes," he replied. "Though I'm a Brahman, I carry on the trade of a potter." "What?" said the astonished Raja. "You, a Brahman, carry on the trade of a potter!"¹⁴ What on earth do you mean?" "Listen, your Majesty," answered the Brahman in verse. "My soul is like clay. That clay is moistened with the tears of my starving wife and children. With that moist clay, I frame many, many vessels, namely, hopes. And my destiny is ever shattering these vessels. Therefore I say that, though I am a Brahman, I have had to take up the trade of a potter." The Raja was greatly charmed with such a beautiful verse. Never in all his life, had he heard anything equal to it.

¹³ He made what is known as a *sāshṭāṅga* obeisance—a prostration such that all eight (*aṣṭa*) members of the body (*āṅga*), the hands, breast, forehead, knees, and feet, touch the ground.

¹⁴ The trade of potter was and is an impossibly low-caste occupation for a *Bhattacharji* Brahman.

“Thākur,” said he, “thanks to your blessing,¹⁵ many pundits are in the habit of visiting me, but none of them has ever recited such a wonderful verse as this. Never once have I met a man of such amazing ability as you. I can’t tell you how pleased I am with you! I wonder what I should give you as a reward. It won’t do to insult you by offering the sort of things I give to the common ruck of pundits. Really, I can’t think of anything in my possession that is fit to be presented to you.” Saying this, he sat in silence, thinking for a while. Then, suddenly getting up from his throne, he embraced the Brahman with great fervour, and said, “Thākur, I can think of nothing else fit to be given to such a scholar as you, so I give you my own bosom.” The gift of the Raja’s bosom quite took away the Brahman’s breath. Fairly flabbergasted as he was, however, he somehow managed to give the Raja his blessing in due form, and made his exit. When he reached the gateway, his umbrella and stick were nowhere to be seen. He asked the sepoy about them, but they told him roughly to shut up. Were they set there to look after his rubbish? At this, the poor Brahman could no longer keep back his tears. How was he to make the journey home? His umbrella and staff, the only things he had to help him, even these were now gone. Thinking

¹⁵ A very common formula of politeness. You ask a man, who never saw you before, some question about himself or his family. “By your blessing, such-and-such is the case,” he replies. When a European visits an out-of-the-way village, the people come to him with all sorts of petitions. *E.g.*, “Shaheb, the water we get to drink *by your blessing* isn’t very good. Couldn’t you graciously induce the Sarkār to dig us another tank?”

sadly on his evil luck, he took the road home, and, begging his way, after much suffering, arrived in sight of his house. The Brāhmaṇī had no fears that her husband would return empty-handed this time. So, as soon as she saw him coming, she ran to meet him, and eagerly asked, "Well, Thākur, what have you brought?" "Oh, I've brought plenty," was the reply. "Come away inside, and I'll let you see." Hearing this, the Brāhmaṇī felt surer than ever that he must have brought something very fine. She hurried back into the house, followed by her husband. The moment he got inside the door, he clasped his wife to his bosom so vigorously that she screamed, "Oh! oh! What are you doing? Let me go! Let me go!" Her husband said, "Why, what are you going on about? I'm giving you what I got." "What do you mean?" said she. "Just what I say," was the reply. "Now you see all I got. Didn't I tell you that, for the present, my destiny holds nothing of any use for me? The Raja did honour enough to my learning. He gave me what no other pundit ever got—his own bosom, as he said. I mean, he embraced me, as if I were his dearest friend. But, as for cash, not a single pice did he give me."¹⁶ The Brāhmaṇī was terribly put out. She hadn't a word to say.

¹⁶ Cf. CLER, 489 ff. An unfortunate merchant, urged by his wife, resorts unwillingly to the king for help. The king gives him a large quantity of gold coins, but, by way of sparing his dignity, puts them inside a melon. The merchant, supposing what he has got to be only a melon, gives it away, and is thus not a penny the better by his visit to the court. Incited by his wife, he goes again, and the king gives him another melon full of money, which he bestows upon a beggar, and, thus, a second time, gets no pecu-

At length, the six months came to an end, much to the Brāhmaṇī's joy. "Now, Ṭhākur," said she, "those confounded six months are past. You're no longer under Shōni's evil eye. Now's the time for another visit to the Raja." "You're quite right, my dear," was the reply. "I'm certain to gain something worth while by going now." The Brāhmaṇī was overjoyed. "Well, Ṭhākur," said she, "now that the planets are favourable to you, no matter what you do, it'll turn out well. You used often to say, yourself, that, when one's stars are favourable, even if he does wicked deeds, they bring him good.¹⁷ So, this time, when you go to the Raja, don't try to please him with flattery and the like. Rather abuse him well, and let's see what your planets will bring out of that for you." "That's

niary benefit from the royal kindness. In RRT, p. 157, an unlucky man twice receives ten roubles, which his wife gives away, not knowing what she is doing. His luck turns with the gift of two farthings, which he gives to a fisherman. Cf. the story of Hassan Alhabbal, the rope-maker, in the 'Thousand and One Nights,' and the variant of it in TYT, pp. 460 ff. In KSS, I, pp. 515 ff., thrice over, the king Lakshadatta presents a citron filled with jewels to his needy dependent, Labdhadatta, who gives it away, supposing it to be merely a citron, and, thus, it comes back to the king. But, when the same gift is again bestowed on Labdhadatta on the fourth day, it slips from his hand and breaks as he is receiving it. The Hindu explanation of such a course of events is that, "until a suitor's guilt, which stands in his way, is removed, a king, even though disposed to give, cannot give; but, when a man's guilt is effaced, a king gives, though strenuously dissuaded from doing so; this depends upon works in a previous state of existence." For, mighty as they are, even the planets are absolutely subservient to Karma. Cf. KSS, I, p. 259.

¹⁷ So, the attempts of enemies to injure him are said to turn to the advantage of the man fated to be fortunate—CLER, Note on p. 147.

the very thing to do," he replied. "Nay, let me once get admitted to the Raja's presence, and not only will I not flatter him, I'll thrash him with my stick."

Saying this, he proceeded to get his clothes and so forth ready, just as on the previous occasions. Then, having determined by astrological reckoning an auspicious day and hour¹⁸ for visiting the Raja, he started on his journey. When he reached the palace gateway, the old durwan who had introduced him before, was sitting there. He had seen with his own eyes with how great deference the Raja had received the old Brahman. So, this time, as soon as he asked for an audience, he at once most respectfully led him into the royal presence. As before, the Raja, on seeing a Brahman enter, very courteously advanced to meet him, when the Brahman, without a word, rushing up to him, struck him such a blow on the chest with his stick that the Raja staggered backward four or five paces, and fell all his length on the floor. The courtiers were furious with rage at the Brahman's strange behaviour. The guards drew their swords—another moment, and it would have been all up with the Brahman. But the planets were now exceedingly favourable to him. Seeing what would naturally result from the Brahman's mad action, they caused the roof of the hall, exactly over the spot where the Raja had stood when the Brahman struck him, to fall in with a tremendous crash.¹⁹ Thereupon the

¹⁸ A most important precaution. See No. VI, Note 24. So, when Somadatta resolves to start cultivation, he is careful to ascertain a lucky day on which to go to the jungle to look out a plot to clear—KSS, I, p. 153.

¹⁹ Cf. FOD, p. 83 ; also, LDB, pp. 41 and 43—the minister's son

Raja, overjoyed at his miraculous escape, with all haste ordered the guards to sheathe their swords, and cried out to the Brahman, "Thākur, never, so long as I live, will I forget the service you have done me to-day. I owe my life to you." Then, turning to the bystanders, he said, "Don't you see, if the Brahman hadn't given me such a push the very moment he came in, the roof would have fallen on me and killed me? If, instead of shoving me, he had only warned me, that would have been of no use. I mightn't have believed him, or, even if I had, I mightn't have got quickly enough out of the way of the falling roof. Thus, you see, the Brahman did the very wisest thing that he could." The Raja's words made them feel rather ashamed, and they all begged the Brahman's pardon for the disrespect they had shown him. The Brahman accepted their excuses with great amiability, and gave the Raja his blessing. The latter had not till now recognized him. When he knew that his benefactor was the same pundit whose learning and poetical ability had made such an impression on him, his joy was redoubled. "I never met a pundit anything like so clever and learned as you," said he. "Besides, I shall be in your debt as long as I live. This kingdom is as much yours as mine. You must remain at my court."²⁰ The Brahman was only too glad to agree

saves the prince and his wife from a similar danger. In the 'Mādanakāmarājankadai,' a minister's son, warned by the conversation of two birds, carries his master asleep out of his tent, just before a huge branch falls upon it and crushes it. Cited in CLP, I, p. 245. Cf., also, CLER, pp. 431 f.

²⁰ Cf. the catastrophic suddenness and completeness with which the luck of Naṣṣar changes—CLER, pp. 141 ff.

to this proposal. Forthwith, the Raja made every sort of provision for him on the most magnificent scale. Materials were collected and workmen summoned to build him a splendid mansion. Whole potfuls of rupees were sent off to his house. And the Raja in person, surrounded by his retinue, escorted the Brahman home in the grandest style. This sudden change of fortune far surpassed even the Brāhmaṇī's wildest expectations. Seeing her husband return with such pomp and state, she was almost beside herself with joy, and listened with wondering delight to the Brahman's account of his adventure. And the favour of the Raja enabled the old couple to pass the rest of their lives in perfect comfort and happiness.

IV.

THE BRAHMAN WHO SWALLOWED A GOD.

THERE lived in a certain place, so the story goes, a Brahman and his wife. The Brahman was very poor, and was doomed by a singular fate to this perpetual trouble, that, when he had eaten half his rice, something or other always occurred to interrupt him, so that he could eat no more.¹

One day, an invitation to the Raja's house came to the Brahman. He thereupon said to his wife: "Half my rice is all I can ever eat: never once in my whole life has my hunger been satisfied. To-day, I've chanced to get this invitation to the Raja's house; but how am I to go? My clothes are dirty, and, if I go a shabby-looking sight, most likely the durwan will turn me out." Hearing this, his wife said, "I will clean your clothes; then you shall put them on and go." So she took and rubbed his clothes with *qhar*,² and, having thoroughly cleaned them, gave them back to him. The Brahman put them on, and started for the Raja's house. As he

¹ "Stopped when one's rice is only half-eaten" is a proverbial expression in common use. Cf. "Ashes in one's rice, when it is served up," a saying employed in much the same way as our "Many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

² Sk., *kshāra* = any alkali, such as soda or potash.

was an old and feeble man, it was almost evening before he arrived. When he did get there, he saw that the Brahmans' feast was over. But the Raja, seeing the Brahman come, saluted him very respectfully, and ordered his servants to give him a good dinner. Immediately a great many people set about attending to the Brahman, and he, having found a convenient place, soon cooked and served up his dinner.³

As he viewed the dishes of various dainties spread out before him, the Brahman was greatly delighted. He thought to himself, "To-day, at any rate, I will eat my fill." He then sat down and began eating. Now, it happened that, on a beam of the roof, there was a little earthen pot hanging. Just as the Brahman had half finished his dinner, that pot broke, and some of the pieces fell into his food.⁴ He immediately

³ See No. I, Note 6.

⁴ The narrator stated that very strictly living Brahmans may eat rice only once in the day. This seems to be at variance with Medhātithi's comment on Manu, II, 56, according to which two "regular meals" are allowed—one in the morning and one in the evening. Such, at any rate, is present-day custom. Probably, the falling of the fragments of the pot into the food would be held to pollute it. In any case, for a strict Hindu to resume eating after an interruption is out of the question. That would involve the eating of leavings. Speaking on the part of the eater is enough to constitute an interruption. See B. C. Chatterji's 'Durgesh-nandinī,' pp. 50 ff. A mischievous woman tricks a simpleton of a Brahman into speaking and afterwards beginning to eat again, and then threatens to tell people. Similar instances of "providential" baulking of people when wishing to eat, may be found in SIF, pp. 227 ff. In 'Raja Harichand's Punishment,' the plums on a tree move out of his reach; a fish leaps out of a pot into the river; pigeons fly away out of the pot, and maggots fill their place.

drank a little water,⁵ got up and washed his hands and mouth, and went to the Raja. Seeing the Brahman come, the Raja did him much reverence, and said, "Thākur, are you fully satisfied?" The Brahman answered: "Mōharaj, there has been no want of respect and attention to me. My own destiny is to blame that I have not fared well." "Why," said the Raja, "what has happened?" The Brahman replied: "Mōharaj, in the room where I was sitting at food, a little earthen pot was hung up. Suddenly, it chanced to break and spoiled my rice." On hearing this, the Raja became very angry, and gave his servants a scolding. Then he said to the Brahman, "Sir, wait you here to-night; to-morrow, I will give you food with my own hands." The Brahman consented, and remained that night in the Raja's house. Next day, the Raja, having himself made all the preparations, told the Brahman to eat. In the place where he went for his dinner this time, there was nothing by which his rice could possibly be spoiled. To-day, therefore, the Brahman sat down to eat, greatly rejoicing. But, when he had got half through his dinner, Bidhātā⁶ saw that he must be stopped, and yet he could not see any means of interfering. At last he, himself, took the form of a

⁵ Sk., *gaṇḍūsha*. The drinking of a little water out of the hand before and after a meal, by way of rinsing the mouth, is a prescribed ceremony, which must on no account be omitted.

⁶ In Sk. literature, Vidhātā is a name of Brahmā, as Creator, or of Viśvakarman. But, popularly, by Vidhātā Purusha—Bengali, Bidhātā Purush—is understood the divinity that fixes beforehand a person's lot in life. See No. XXIV, Note 9. In 'Life's Secret'—LDB, pp. 9 ff,—a sister and niece of Vidhātā's figure,

golden frog⁷ and, coming to the edge of the Brahman's plantain leaf,⁸ tumbled into his food.

The Brahman, being too busy to notice anything, ate up his rice, frog and all.⁹ Dinner over, the Raja asked him, "How now, Thākur? Have you been satisfied to-day?" The Brahman answered: "Mōharaj, never since I was born have I dined so well." Saying this, he prepared to take his leave. The Raja gave him, also, some rupees,¹⁰ which the Brahman joyfully accepted, and set off at once for home. After a while, evening came on, as the Brahman was walking through the midst of a jungle. Suddenly, he became aware of a voice saying, "Brahman, let me go! Brahman, let me go!" The Brahman looked all round about, but could see nobody. Again the voice was heard, "Brahman, let me go." Then he said, "Who are you?" The answer came, "I am Bidhātā Purush, Bidhātā Purush!" The Brahman replied, "Where are you?" Bidhātā answered, "You have swallowed me." "Impossible!" said the Brahman. "Yes," said Bidhātā. "In the form of a frog, I tumbled into your food, and you ate me up." "Nothing could be better," replied the Brahman; "you've bothered me all my life, you rascal, I'll not let you go! I'll close up my throat rather!"¹¹ Bidhātā, in great fear,

⁷ Said by the narrator to be so called from the colour of its back.

⁸ See No. XIV, Note 6.

⁹ On "Swallow" stories, see MCF, pp. 47 ff. The subject of "Der verschlungene Gott" is very fully treated in Hans Schmidt's 'Jona.'

¹⁰ The donation—*Sk.*, *dakṣhiṇā*—which all the Brahmans invited to such a feast receive.

¹¹ *Brahmani in alvo demersus deus, per aliam viam descendens*,

said again, "Brahman, let me go! I'm being stifled!" But the Brahman hurried home as quickly as he could, and, when he arrived, he said to his wife: "Give me a seat and a hookah, and you hold a stout stick ready in your hand." His wife did so at once, and the Brahman, sitting down, smoked straight on, taking care at the same time not to set Bidhātā free. The god was nearly stifled, but the Brahman quite disregarded all his entreaties.

Meanwhile, in Heaven and Earth and the infernal world, there was a terrible commotion. All living things were on the point of dying for want of food. The universe was on the eve of collapsing.¹² Then all the gods, having assembled in council, resolved that one of them must be sent to the Brahman. But who was to go? After a second deliberation, they all besought Lōqhī¹³ to go. She said, "If I go to that Brahman, I shall never come back." But, alas! what could she do? So she yielded to their prayer, and departed to the Brahman's house. Arriving there, she stood at the door, and called loudly on the Brahman, who, on learning that it was Lōqhī who called, put his cloth round his neck.¹⁴ He invited her to be seated, and asked her what, in the name of wonder, had brought her to a poor man's house. "Ṭhākur,"

evadere conatus est. Decoris causa, in hoc loco fabulam paululum mutavi.

¹² Cf. the difficulties which arose when Death got "treed" by "Gambling Hänsel"—GHT, I, p. 323—and shut up in a sack, in the Bohemian Tale—CLP, I, pp. 387 f.

¹³ Sk., *Lakshmī*, wife of Viṣṇu, the goddess of good fortune, and the ideal of beauty. The last syllable of Lōqhī is nasalized.

¹⁴ The *chhadōr*—No. III, Note 9—is put over the back of the neck, with the ends hanging down over the shoulders in front, in sign of reverence or supplication.

said Lōqhī, “you have taken Bidhātā a prisoner, and are keeping him. Let him go, or the universe will be ruined.” “Give me the stick,” said the Brahman to his wife, “and I’ll show you what sort of a goddess of good fortune this Lōqhī is. From the day I was born, I have enjoyed nothing but bad luck, and now Lōqhī comes to my house, forsooth!” Hearing this, the goddess vanished, trembling with fear. She told the gods what had happened, and, after another consultation, they sent Shōrōsh’ōtī.¹⁵

When Shōrōsh’ōtī reached the Brahman’s house, she called out loudly, “Brahman, are you in? Brahman, are you in?” The Brahman saluted Shōrōsh’ōtī with great respect, and said, “Mother, what do you want in a poor man’s house?” “Thākur, the universe is fast going to destruction; let Bidhātā go.” The Brahman burst into a great passion, and cried, “Wife, give me the stick! I will teach this goddess of learning. Even the first letters of the alphabet are oxflesh¹⁶ to me. Shōrōsh’ōtī comes to my house, does she?” Hearing this, the goddess at once made off, stumbling and getting up again in her hurry.

Finally, Śib himself undertook the mission. Now the Brahman was a Śoibō,¹⁷ so zealous, too, that, with-

¹⁵ Sk., *Sarasvatī*, wife of Brahmā, goddess of speech and learning.

¹⁶ The most impossible of all foods for a Brahman, the merest external contact with which would be a terrible disaster. The popular story is that the great Tagore family of Calcutta owes its present condition of *Pirāli*-hood to its high-caste Brahman ancestors’ having been made to smell roast beef in the time of the Nawābs. The Brahman means to say with all possible emphasis that he possesses no learning whatever.

¹⁷ Sk. *Śaiva*, an adjective formed from the noun *Śiva*, denoting the sect which regards Śiva as the Supreme Being.

out doing *pūjā* to Śib, he would not touch even water. As soon, therefore, as the god came, he and his wife, having given him water to wash his feet, and presented an offering of *bel*¹⁸ leaves, holy grass,¹⁹ flowers, sun-dried rice, and sandal wood,²⁰ did *pūjā* to him. Śib then sat down, and said to the Brahman, "Brahman, let Bidhātā go." The Brahman answered, "As you have come, of course I must let him go, but what am I to do, myself? I have suffered affliction from the day of my birth, and this Bidhātā here is the cause of it all." Then Mōhādeb²¹ said: "You need not trouble yourself on that account; you will go with your body²² to heaven." Having got this promise, the Brahman relaxed his throat and opened his mouth, and Bidhātā came out.²³ Thereafter, Mōhādeb, taking the Brahman and his wife along with him, went away back to heaven.

¹⁸ Sk., *vilva*, the tree *Aegle Marmelos*, the leaves of which are an essential in the *pūjā*—ritual worship—of Śiva.

¹⁹ Sk., *dūrvā*.

²⁰ The water, etc., formed the *arghya*, a reverential oblation made to gods and venerable men.

²¹ Sk., *Mahādeva* = great god, Śiva's most usual designation.

²² *Viz.*, without dying. Such "translation" is a most signal mark of divine favour. Cf. end of No. VII, Note 14.

²³ *Deo permissum est ut per anum Brahmani ex alvo evaderet.* Cf. Note 11.

A person's being swallowed and afterwards emerging little or none the worse from inside the swallower, is a favourite Folk-tale *motif* all over the world. Mṛigāṅkavatī is swallowed by a Rākshasa and emerges uninjured four times a month—KSS, II, p. 291. A beautiful maiden comes out of an elephant—*ib.*, II, p. 488. See also *ib.*, II, p. 605, and II, pp. 597f. A great ship, full of people, is found in a huge fish when it is cut up—*ib.*, II, p. 599. In 'Pride Abased,' a fish swallows the king, who is afterwards cut out alive, but in rather poor condition—KKT, p. 158. See also, CLP, I, pp. 403 ff.

V.

THE BRAHMAN'S VERSE.¹

IN a certain village, there lived a very poor and ignorant Brahman. He had the greatest difficulty in getting a living. Indeed, so completely from hand to mouth did he live, that, any day he failed to obtain alms, he had to fast altogether, and, as if such a fortune were not sufficiently hard to bear, he had a wife whose tongue made him dread even to enter his house. What with this trial and his poverty together, the poor man was quite at a loss what to do or where to turn. Day and night, the virago kept harping, "Just see how many Brahman pundits go to the Raja's house, recite a verse or two, and are rewarded with money enough to keep their wives and children in comfort, while you, like the utter good-for-nothing that you are, sit idling in the house, or, when you do go begging, bring in the most wretched pittance. There are hundreds of ways of mending our fortunes, but you can't see them because you don't wish to." "What ways?" answered the Brahman. "I'm quite illiterate, myself. How, then, am I to compose a verse? And I'm not well acquainted with any pundit. So, how am I to get a verse from

¹ Cf. Nos. III and X.

somebody else, which I may pass off as my own ? ”
“ Very well,” cried his wife, snatching up her broom,
“ if you can do nothing, clear out ! ”

The poor Brahman made off, but, once out, where was he to go ? He could think of no place of refuge, so, for a while, he walked on, without caring whither. At length he came to a large garden, and there sat down at a tree-foot. As he sat, he kept racking his brains how to improve his condition, but no possible way could he think of. In the midst of his ponderings, a pig happened to come to that place, and, as pigs usually do, began to flounder in the tank and then come up and rub her body against a tree, time about. For a while, the Brahman watched her in silence. Suddenly, a brilliant idea struck him, and he cried out, “ I have it ! I’ve made a verse at last.” So saying, he rose up, got a palm-leaf,² and wrote :

“ Rubbing, rubbing, dipping, then rubbing with might and main ;
What your rubbing’s all for, is easy enough to explain ! ”

When he had written this, the Brahman said to himself, “ Now, shall I go to the Raja and recite my verse, and see what Destiny has in store for me ? Why not ? Who knows what he mayn’t give me as a reward ? ” Having come to this resolution, he set off at once.

It was evening when he reached the palace ; the time of audience was over for that day, and the Raja had retired to the Rání’s apartments. His attendants, too, had all gone off to their own quarters,

² Children still learn to write on palmyra leaves, in out-of-the-way villages in Bengal. The “ infants ” carry, each, a quantity of them wrapped in the little square grass mat they take to school to sit on.

so the Brahman could find nobody to tell his errand. As he waited about, he began to get rather nervous. "Likely enough, when he hears my verse, the Raja will order me a beating instead of giving me a present," he thought to himself. "I'll run no such risks I'll not read the verse, but just leave it about somewhere, and see what comes of it." Accordingly, he sought out the place where the Raja was in the habit of sitting when he was getting shaved, and, there hanging up the palm-leaf with his verse on it, hurried away home; but it was very late when he arrived. His wife began abusing him as usual, but he said, "What are you scolding about now? I've written a verse and left it at the palace. Just wait and see. To-morrow you'll be made a Rání." "You may stop your jokes," she retorted, "nobody here wants them. But this is just like you,—an empty stomach, and a head stuffed with nonsense." "I'm perfectly serious," said he. "I did write a verse, and left it at the Raja's. The court had been dismissed, so I could not see him to-day; but, to-morrow, he can't fail to notice my verse. And won't he be delighted with it? We shall have no more trouble after that. Why, you shall be made a Rání at the very least."

Next morning came, and the Raja, getting up, washed his hands and face, and then went and sat down in the place where he used to be shaved. The barber was already there, busy stropping his razor.

Now, the Rání and the Kotwal³ had plotted together to murder the Raja, but nobody had courage to attack him openly. So, at length, the Rání sent secretly for the barber and said to him, "To-morrow,

³ The Chief of the police.

when you shave⁴ the Raja, cut his throat with your razor. You shall receive an immense reward, and incur no danger whatever." The hope of the reward was too much for the barber's fidelity: he promised the Rání to do as she bade, and, consequently, this morning was making his razor very sharp, rubbing it on the whetstone again and again. The Raja sat silently waiting, when suddenly his eye chanced to light upon the Brahman's verse, and, quite unthinkingly, he read it out:

"Rubbing, rubbing, dipping, then rubbing with might and main;
What your rubbing's all for, is easy enough to explain!"

Hearing these words, the barber was thunder-struck. He stood staring for a moment, then, throwing away the razor, strop and all, he clasped the Raja's feet, and cried, weeping bitterly, "Möharaj, pardon me! I know nothing about it. It was the Rání and the Kotwal bade me. Möharaj, you would not kill a poor man like me!" He was in too great a fright to say any more. The Raja was astounded. He said sternly to the barber, "What is the matter? Tell the truth, and no harm shall happen to you." The barber answered, "Möharaj, this is all I know. Yesterday, Her Majesty sent for me and said, 'Tomorrow, when you are shaving the Raja, if you can manage to cut his throat, I will give you an immense reward, and I promise that no harm shall happen to you.' The Kotwal, too, said the same, for he was standing there at the time. I was enticed by the bribe, and intended to commit the crime. But you

⁴ Shaving, with a Hindu, is an important religious duty. See MWR, pp. 374 f.

have detected all.⁵ Pardon me, Your Majesty.” The Raja sent away the barber, and then made proclamation throughout the city by beat of drum, that the maker of the verse should be seized and brought before him. The Brahman, on hearing this, was terribly alarmed. “It’s all up with me now,” he thought. “What I feared has come to pass. The Raja will have my head, to a certainty. That confounded verse!” Presently, the Raja’s messengers came and laid hold of him. The Brahman, beside himself with terror, began to say to his wife, “Now you’ve got what you wanted. What with the alms I brought in and suchlike, we were getting along not so badly. But nothing would satisfy you short of my going to the palace, and see now what’s come of it!” His wife replied, “What are you weeping for? You’ve done no crime, that the Raja should cut your head off. Go along to the palace. Let us

⁵ Cf. KSS, I, pp. 273 ff. The poor and foolish Brahman, Hariśarman, pretends to possess supernatural knowledge. When some gold and jewels are carried off from the palace, he is summoned to detect the thief. Now, the theft had been committed by a maid-servant called Jihvā (= Tongue) with the help of her brother. Hariśarman, being quite at a loss and much afraid, apostrophizes his own tongue about the trouble its boasting has brought upon him. This leads to Jihvā’s confession. The Raja, advised by his envious minister, in order to put Hariśarman to a further test, places a frog in a pitcher, and, covering it, asks him what it contains. Now, Hariśarman’s father had called him by the pet name, ‘Frog,’ when he was a child. In his perplexity and despair, he says to himself, “This is a fine pitcher for you, Frog! It has destroyed you.” Cf., also, the story of ‘Dr. Knowall,’ GHT, II, pp. 56 f.

It is just in such cases of what a European would call curious coincidence that an Oriental sees, not chance, but the most striking evidence of Fate’s sovereign ordering of events. See KSS, I, p. 402, and II, p. 382.

see what Fate has in store for us." The Brahman again said, "I don't need to go. I know very well already. The Raja will take you and make you his Rání, and will have me impaled. What more would you have?" So saying, and weeping bitterly, the Brahman was brought to the palace. When he saw him, the Raja asked, "Thākur, did you write this verse?" The Brahman, still weeping, answered "Yes, Mōharaj." The Raja then said, "You have saved my life.⁶ How can I reward you as you deserve? The half of my kingdom is yours." On hearing such words, the Brahman was overjoyed, and the Raja's attendants proceeded at once to make him a Raja too, with all due ceremony. Meanwhile, the Raja had departed to the Rání's residence, where he ordered her and the Kotwal to be beheaded. Thereafter he, with the Brahman and his wife, continued to live together in the greatest happiness and splendour.

⁶ Cf. CLP, II, pp. 317 ff.; also, the preservation of the Raja's life through the blow of the Brahman's stick in No. III.

VI.

THE STOLEN WIFE.

IN a certain village lived a Brahman and a Kāyastha, who were very great friends. The Brahman was wretchedly poor, and his old mother and himself made up his entire household. The Kāyastha's circumstances were a little better, and several of his relatives were still living. Both were unmarried. One day, the Brahman said to his friend, " Brother, I positively must get married. I can't stand this sort of life any longer. But how am I to raise the money to defray all the expenses of a marriage? And, even if I could, who would be willing to give his daughter to a man so poor as I am? ¹ All the

¹ The Brahman could not have belonged to a high class in his caste, otherwise his poverty would have been no obstacle to his procuring a wife, both beautiful and wealthy. Nor would bad character either, for that matter. Dīnabandhu Mitra, in his 'Līlāvati,' describes the Brahman Zemindar as anxious to wed his beautiful, virtuous, and accomplished daughter to an utter wastrel, without one redeeming trait, either outward or inward. Now-a-days, of course, character, education, and the probable ability of the bridegroom to support a wife are looked to, as well as caste, which, however, still remains the supreme consideration. The members of the great Pirāli house of the Tagores, which claims to be Radriya Brahman and will intermarry only with that class, when bridegrooms are wanted for their daughters, are willing to pay heavy premiums for them to their families as compensation for the detriment to caste which alliance with a Pirāli entails.

same, get a wife I must and will." "You're quite right, brother," replied the Kāyastha. "And I'm of the very same mind, myself. But there's no chance of our getting wives in this neighbourhood. Let's go and try our luck in some distant village. By hook or by crook, we'll get hold of a couple of girls, and, when we've fetched them home, it'll be easy enough to say we've married them." "But, brother," objected the Brahman, "I see a lot of difficulties about that plan. Whose girls are we to get hold of, and are any likely to be willing to come with us? No, that won't work." "Don't you trouble your head about the business," was the reply. "Just come along with me, and I'll bring you back a married man." "You're promising a deal more than you can perform," said the Brahman. "I'm much more likely to lose my life than to gain a bride by any such adventure." "Look here, brother," answered the Kāyastha, "I'll do all the thinking. You'll have only to act as I bid you. And you'll see how soon I'll get you married. But one thing you must promise. After I have spared no pains to find a wife for you, you must in turn do all you can to help me to procure one for myself."² "Of course; that goes without saying," replied the Brahman.

This compact made, the two friends waited for an auspicious day,³ and then set out on their quest.

² Apart altogether from the somewhat unusual character of matrimonial enterprise in the case of these two worthies, a friend's help was a necessity, as, in the matter of marriage, no Hindu can, himself, take any sort of overt action.

³ Cf. No. III, Note 18. So, Sūryaprabha marches out to war at a moment on the seventh day fixed by the astrologers—KSS, I, p. 434. See, also, Note 24 in this story.

All day, they walked on, and, towards evening, reached a village neither of them had ever visited before. Just outside of it was a fine big tank, to which all the women and girls in the village used to come after sunset to draw water, and bathe, and wash their clothes. Beside it stood a banyan tree, at the foot of which the two friends sat down, and began to view the women going to or coming from the tank. Just then, a very pretty young woman appeared—as pretty as she was young. Taking a good look at her, the Kāyastha asked his companion, “Brother, how does that young woman please you?” “Very much indeed,” was the reply. “But what does that matter? There’s no chance of her becoming my wife.” “Just wait and see whether I shan’t manage it,” answered the Kāyastha.

While this consultation was taking place, the young woman, after washing herself and her *sāri*,⁴ went away back the way she came. Seeing this, the two friends got up and followed her at some distance. On entering the village, she turned off by a side-path, and they sat down in a shop close by, and got into conversation with the shopkeeper. After talking for a while about this and that, while they sat smoking, the Kāyastha, in a casual sort of way, asked the shopkeeper, “By the way, who was the young woman that turned along the lane over there?” The shop-

⁴ A long piece of cloth—in Bengal, usually, thin white cotton—which Hindu women wind round the body, the one portion forming a petticoat, the other covering the upper part of the person, and, when necessary, the head as well. Even without a bodice, the *sāri* discharges the primary function of dress much more efficiently than European “full” evening costume. Cf. CLER, p. 460. See, also, MWR, p. 396.

keeper was a talkative old fellow. If you asked him one thing, he would tell you half-a-dozen. "Oh, she's a Brahman's daughter," said he. "She's the best-looking girl in the village. But much good that does her. She's been very unfortunate. Immediately after her marriage, her husband went away back to his home, and has never been here since, nor sent any word about himself. We hear that he has got a situation in Ranigunje, and has married and set up house there. To all intents and purposes, he has abandoned his wife here. That's why I said the girl has been very unfortunate." The Kāyastha pretended to be very sorry for the poor thing, and inquired, "What relatives has she here?" "Her father and mother live here," answered the shopkeeper. "Her father's name is Ramesh'ör Chökröbörti. He stays quite near here. That's his house, just over yonder. And where are you two gentlemen going?" "Ah, we've a long journey before us," replied the Kāyastha. "We intend to stay only the one night here. But, speaking about that young woman, you might tell us her husband's name, and what sort of employment he's in. Likely enough, we shall be passing Ranigunje, and we might take the opportunity of looking him up and trying to persuade him to come and visit his wife here. "Ah, it's easy to see you are born gentlemen," said the shopkeeper. "It's very kind, indeed, of you to think of taking so much trouble. The Babu's name is Ramlochön Mukherji. People say he's a clerk in such-and-such a firm's office."

Having learned this much, after taking another pull at the hookah and thanking the old shopkeeper

profusely for his hospitality, the two friends rose and bade him good-evening. As soon as they were outside in the road, the Kāyastha said, "The business is as good as done. Come along, let us go to her house." "How can we do that?" asked the Brahman. "It's simple enough," was the reply. "You pass yourself off as Ramesh'ör Babu's⁵ son-in-law, and I'll be your servant. Now, attend well to what I say. As soon as we enter the house, you must bow respectfully to your father-in-law and mother-in-law. Then, when they ask why you have been so long in visiting them, you must say that you suffered from a long and very severe illness—so severe that you were actually carried down to the Ganges;⁶ that, as Fate would have it, you were fortunate enough to recover, contrary to all expectation; but that the effect of the illness has been completely to change your appearance and your voice, so that nobody, seeing you or hearing you speak, would recognize you to be the same person. Further, you must say, that your mother is dangerously ill—is, in fact, dying; that, as she was living all alone, with nobody in the house to give her even a drink of water, the moment you got news of her being ill, you asked some weeks' leave from

⁵ *Babu* denotes any man whose social position is such that he would be addressed or spoken of as "Mr." So-and-so. It is used with the personal, not with the family, name. A European would say, "Mr. Chökröbörti;" a Bengali says, "Ramesh'ör Babu."

⁶ No member of a strict Hindu family is allowed to die inside the house. When death seems imminent, the bed is carried outside, and, very often, a start for the Ganges is made at once. If it is reached in time for the patient to die beside or in the sacred stream, so much the better. Cases of apparently dying people recovering after arriving there, do, of course, sometimes occur.

your employers, and hurried home ; and that, as soon as you arrived, your mother expressed a strong desire to see your wife, who is here. You have, therefore, come at once to fetch her, and must start for home again this very night." The Brahman, with much trepidation, agreed to follow his friend's instructions.

The two walked up to the door of the house, and the Kāyastha began to call, " Oh, Chokkotti Mōshay,⁷ are you in ? " The old Brahman had lain down to rest, but, hearing the call, he got up and, opening the door, asked, " Who are you, good people ? " " Why, sir," answered the Kāyastha, " that's your son-in-law. Don't you recognise him ? " The moment he heard the word, " son-in-law," the old man, quite overjoyed, cried, " What ! Is it you, my dear Ramlochōn ? Come in, my dear, come in ! " The supposed son-in-law, making a respectful bow to his father-in-law, followed him into the house. The old man called to his wife, who was in the women's part of the house, " Come ! Quick ! Quick ! Our Ramlochōn is come." The old lady came hurrying out, and the Brahman bowed to her very respectfully, son-in-law fashion. She shed tears of joy. " Oh, my dear ! " said she. " Have you at length remembered us after so long ? What had we done to displease you that, year after year, you never came near us ? And we have no other sons. You are our all." As she spoke, her tears streamed down more and more profusely. " Don't weep, mother,"

⁷ A more respectful mode of address than " Ramesh'ōr Babu." " Chokkotti Mōshay " is the vulgar pronunciation of Chōkrōbōrti Mōhāshoy. The Kāyastha has to speak like a servant.

said the impostor. "It's not my fault that I've had to stay away so long. I've been so ill. For months, I was at death's door. Don't you see how sickness has altered me? I'm quite a different man. My very voice is no longer the same." Hearing this, the mother-in-law began very affectionately to condole with him. "May you live long, my dear," said she, by way of comforting him. "In time, you'll get back your good looks. Where there are the bones, the flesh will come of itself." With these words, she went away to cook supper for him, and, in order that he might have some refreshment at once, the old Brahman hurried to the nearest milkman's and confectioner's, and, knocking them up, got a quantity of milk and *shondesh*.⁸ On his way back, he called at a fisherman's, too, and procured a fine big fish, which he gave to his wife to cook, and then set the milk and sweetmeats before his son-in-law and his servant. While they were eating, the daughter was preparing betel for them in the next room. She, too, was overjoyed at the arrival of her husband after so long an absence that she had given up all hope of ever seeing him again. But, taking a peep at him through the venetian door between the two rooms, she at once became very suspicious. "That my husband!" said she to herself. "Not a bit of it! Well; let me see what Fate has in store for me."

Presently, the old Brahman returned, and told them that supper had been set out on the clay verandah of the house. Thither they repaired, and

⁸ Made with sugar and fresh curd; the most popular of all Bengali sweets,

when, first, the master with his father-in-law, and, after them, the servant⁹ had eaten their fill, the supposed son-in-law, turning to their host, said, "Mōhášoy, I haven't yet told you all my misfortunes. My venerable mother is most dangerously ill. It was this news that made me take leave from the office and hurry home. The first words my mother said to me on my arrival, were, 'Fetch her'¹⁰ (*viz.*, his wife) 'at once, else I shall never see her again.' So I hurried off here. I can't wait. You must let your daughter go with me this very night." "What are you saying, my dear fellow?" cried the old man. "You have just arrived, and after all these years, too!"¹¹ You must stay a few days, and let us have a good time together. The neighbours must have a chance of coming to see you, too. After that, I won't, of course, object to your going and taking your property" (*viz.*, his wife) "with you. But, first,

⁹ Being of different castes, the Brahman and his man could not, of course, eat *rice* together.

¹⁰ Observe, not merely the personal name but even the word meaning "wife" is avoided. A Bengali usually speaks of his wife as his "*pōribar*," *i.e.*, "family," although referring to her individually.

¹¹ A son-in-law's visit is regarded as a very joyful event not only for his wife—see the first ch. of Śivanath Śastri's exquisite story, 'Mejo Bou' = 'The Second Daughter-in-law'—but for her whole family. This must certainly have been the case when Kulinism flourished in full vigour. An angel's visits could hardly be "in it," so far as rarity is concerned, with those of some Kulin husbands, who could hardly make the round of all their wives in the course of a lifetime. "A Kulin of a high class might then marry more than a hundred wives without any difficulty, and there are still some who have such large numbers of wives as to necessitate their keeping regular registers for refreshing their memory about the names and residences of their spouses"—J. N. Bhattacharjee, 'Hindu Castes and Sects,' p. 41,

give us time fully to realize our good fortune. Ah, my daughter, who was for so long to all intents and purposes a widow, is now going to keep her husband's house!" "That's all very true," was the reply, "but, in present circumstances, it's absolutely impossible for me to stay. Any minute, my mother may breathe her last, and there's positively no one in the house to do anything for her. You must let your daughter go at once." The old Brahman, though greatly disappointed, had perforce to consent, and went away to hire palki-bearers, whom he brought back along with him,¹² so that his son-in-law might be able to start the moment day broke.

Meanwhile, the supposed son-in-law had gone to his wife's (?) room to rest. The young woman, too, repaired thither, after she had supped. If any doubt that he might be her husband after all had lingered in her mind, it was quite dispelled the moment she got a good look at him close at hand. What was she to do? She had to lie down, but she turned her back to the Brahman, without saying a single word to him. He coaxed and entreated. It was of no use. Then he began to say, "Is it because my appearance and voice are so altered that you can't bear me? See, I brought a beautiful set of gold ornaments¹³ for you from Ranigunje. As soon as we reach home, you'll get them to wear. What's the use of making us both miserable by going on

¹² This is a quite usual precaution in the Mofussil—the country, as opposed to the town.

¹³ This is believed by Bengali men—not without reason—to be the most effective, nay, an absolutely infallible means of pleasing a Bengali woman.

like that?" Not a word could he get out of her. She lay, weeping silently.

When it was near daybreak, the Kāyastha, who had slept in the verandah, got up and began loudly to call, "Babu, Babu!" The Brahman rose and went out, and, seeing there was no time to lose, he and his companion began at once to prepare for their departure. Their host was already up and seated on the verandah, and the bearers were sitting beside the palki, smoking and talking noisily. "So you're quite set on going at once?" said the old man to his guest. "Yes, Mōhāshoy," was the reply. "There's no help for it." The old man rose with a sigh, and called to his daughter to dress quickly, and come away. When she came out, he helped her into the palki. The girl was weeping bitterly. So, too, was her mother. But not much time could be allowed them for leave-taking. The bearers lifted the palki. The Brahman bowed humbly to his father-in-law and mother-in-law, and took up the dust from their feet to his head.¹⁴ Then the palki moved off, the Brahman, followed by his servant, walking alongside.

Once outside the village, the bearers smartened their pace, and it took the two friends all their time not to be left behind. Still, a good deal of whispering went on between them. The Kāyastha said to the Brahman, "Well, brother, thanks to me, your business has been satisfactorily accomplished. Now it's your turn to help me. You must promise that, until I've been provided for, you won't live with this girl

¹⁴ The obeisance in question symbolizes this. I never saw a man actually take up some dust and put it on his head.

as your wife. When we get home, you must leave her with your mother, and we'll go off together on a second hunt, till we've secured another young woman. I'll take her, and you'll keep this one. Or, if this proposal does not please you, this one must belong to us both." "No, no," said the Brahman. "That's not to be thought of. I'll help you to find a wife for yourself, as we agreed at the first." The young woman in the palki was listening sharply. Now and again, she managed to catch a word or two of their conversation, and easily divined the rest. Plainly, they were a pair of swindlers. She began fervently to take the name of Bhögöban,¹⁵ for she felt she had no other resource.

Presently, they arrived at a river. The village, to which the Brahman and the Kāyastha belonged, was not very far from this spot. The Kāyastha said to his companion, "We must send away the palki-bearers here. If we take them to our village with us, they'll get to know all about us, and our game'll be up." Then he called to the bearers, "Listen, you fellows. At our house, everything's in confusion with the mistress's being ill. There'll be nobody to cook food for you and make you comfortable till you can start for home again. So, if you go on with us, you'll have no end of trouble and discomfort. Here we can easily get a boat or a carriage to take us home. So we'll give you your full pay and food-money besides, and let you go." The bearers, of course, had no objection to this proposal,

¹⁵ Sk., *bhagavān* = adorable, denoting the supreme God, as in 'Bhagavadgītā' = the song of the Adorable. On the taking of the Divine Name, see No. III, Note 7. Cf. CLER, p. 163, Note, and p. 542.

and, receiving their money, went off with the palki, leaving the young woman with the two men. She had been coming to see through things more and more clearly in the course of the journey; now, she fully understood the situation and had made up her mind how to act. So, when the two friends said her, "It will be better for you to do just as we wish; you'll only make things worse for yourself by trying to thwart us," she replied at once, "I will do whatever you tell me to; for, since you have brought me away here, now I am yours." Addressing the Brahman, she said, "Though you're not really my husband, I've got to accept you as such, and will obey you in everything." Hearing this, they were greatly delighted, and began to say to one another, "What a Lōqhī¹⁶ of a girl! She's as good as she's beautiful. Merely to hear her speak is delightful."

All the time they were talking, they kept walking on towards their village, where they arrived before long. The Brahman at once went into his house, and said to his mother, "Mother, I've got married and have brought my wife home." Greatly excited at this news, the old Brāhmaṇī cried out joyfully, "Where is she, my dear? Where is she?" The supposed bride at once came forward and bowed humbly to her mother-in-law, who, lifting up her hands, began to bless her fervently. "Come, my dear," she said, "my Lōqhī, my golden moon!¹⁷ Long may you live! May your bracelet have plenty of time to wear out. When your head is hoary, may it still bear the vermilion mark. May you

¹⁶ See No. IV, Note 13.

¹⁷ A very common expression of endearment.

have a husband all your life,"¹⁸ and so forth. One by one, the other women of that part of the village came dropping in to see the new wife, and the old Brāhmaṇī showed her off with great pride and delight. All admired her beauty, and congratulated her mother-in-law on her good fortune in being gladdened at her time of life with the sight of such a daughter. "Bride's no name for her," they said. "She's a statue of pure gold." The bride bowed humbly to them all, and spoke to them in the most mannerly fashion. And the old woman begged them to give her son and his wife their blessing,¹⁹ wishing the latter a long life as mistress of her husband's house. She, herself, she said, didn't care how soon she died, now that she had seen her son happily married. After much talk of this kind, the visitors departed to their own homes. But they were hardly outside the old Brāhmaṇī's door before they began to whisper to one another, "What sort of a wedding is this? People turning up all of a sudden, married! She's none that young either. Why wasn't she married long ago! And how's he to support her when he hasn't the means of keeping his own stomach going? Who can have been fools enough to give their daughter to the like of him?"

Anyhow, one thing soon became plain, and that was that the new bride was a model daughter-in-law. She rose early in the morning, and cleaned and tidied up the house. Then she awakened her mother-in-

¹⁸ The iron bracelet, put on at marriage, is broken off when a woman becomes a widow, and she ceases to mark her brow where the hair parts, with the round scarlet spot, the sign that a woman is married and her husband still living.

¹⁹ See No. III, Note 15.

law, rubbed her with oil, helped her to bathe, and washed for her the *sāri* she put off. She brought her dainties from the confectioner's.²⁰ She did all the cooking, and would not touch food, herself, till she had given her mother-in-law her breakfast. The latter never tired of congratulating herself and praising her daughter-in-law.

In this way, a week or two passed—not very pleasantly for the Brahman. According to the compact made with his friend, he was debarred from even so much as speaking to his wife, until one had been got for him too. And, night and day, the Kāyastha kept urging him, “Come away, brother, and get a marriage for me fixed up. Till then, you might as well be unmarried, yourself.” The Brahman was very unwilling to go, but, knowing that the other had him in his power, and at any moment could ruin him by disclosing his secret, at length, one day, he said, “Well, then, come away. Though it's so long since I brought my wife home, all this time, on your account, I haven't been able to say a single word to her. I'm sick of this sort of thing.” “Then the sooner we start, the better,” was the reply.

²⁰ To serve as light refreshments to sustain fainting nature till regular meal-time, *i.e.*, the time when she got her rice. According to Medhātithi's explanation of Manu, II, 56, such eating “between-times” is forbidden. This seems rather hard, as nothing could be more irregular than the “regular meals” in an old-fashioned Bengali household. School-hours generally begin at 10.30 a.m., yet boys have often to be allowed to go home after the first or second period to take breakfast, which was not ready when they had to leave in the morning. A mother will awake small children between 10 and 11 p.m., to give them their evening meal. A man may be invited to an evening-meal party, and, if it is a very big affair, it may be 1 or 2 a.m. next morning before the dishes are served up.

“Very good,” rejoined the Brahman. “Let us start this very day.’ So it was arranged they should leave as soon as they had breakfasted.

The Brahman had now full confidence in his wife. Besides, he couldn’t see what she had to gain by trying to escape. Where was she to go ? So, handing over to her the keys of all his chests, he said to her, “See ; until I’ve arranged a marriage for my friend, I can have no sort of intimacy with you. So I’m going off to-day to attend to that business. I don’t know how long I may be in returning. I leave my mother in your care. I know you’ll be as good to her as you can. I need say no more.” “No,” said she, “you may trust me to do all you would wish. She’s now as much my mother as yours. So I’m not likely to show her any neglect. You can see for yourself whether I’ve been in any way wanting in my duty to her since I came here. And it’s your duty to do all you can to get your friend married. You would be guilty of a great sin if you didn’t. Remember how much trouble he took in connexion with your marriage. It would be a shame for you to delay an hour longer. And don’t be anxious about your household affairs. I’ll keep everything right.” Hearing her speak in this way, the Brahman was quite overcome. If any doubt as to her fidelity still lingered in his breast, it was now completely dispelled. So, leaving everything in her charge, with a perfectly easy mind, he took his departure along with his friend.

For two or three days, the young woman continued to show the old Brāhmaṇī every possible attention, and contrived, without rousing any suspicions, to

find out from her what valuables there were in the house, and where they were kept. Indeed, this was easy enough, as the old woman talked quite freely about everything. Then, one night, having given her the light meal she took in the evening,²¹ she put her to bed. Waiting till she was sound asleep, the young woman proceeded to gather together all the things that were worth taking away, and tied them up in a bundle. Then, locking the door from the outside, she set fire to the house and made off as fast as ever she could. In a very few minutes, she had left the village behind, and found herself in the midst of a wide plain. In what direction was she to go now? "What I had to do, I've done," she said to herself. "Bhögöban has graciously preserved my honour this time, but, if I'm caught again, it'll be all up with me. If I only knew what way to go! But it won't do to stand still here." So thinking, she fervently called Bhögöban to mind,²² and then walked straight on in one direction all that night. At day-break, suddenly she saw that she was close to the tank where she used to come to bathe and wash her clothes. Her joy at the sight was unbounded. Tired as she was, she ran all the rest of the way home. Her parents were greatly astonished to see her—above all, to see her alone. "Where is our son-in-law?" asked her mother. "How in the world could he let you come by yourself?" "Oh, I haven't come alone," she answered. "Yesterday my mother-in-law died,

²¹ Being a widow, she could take only one "square" meal of rice, etc., in the day.

²² Hindus regard "remembering"—Sk., *smaraṇa*—as a means of positively compelling the saving presence of a god.

and my husband has to go with her body to the Ganges. Rather than leave me all by myself in his house, he came round this way and left me here. Seeing he was conveying a corpse, he would not come to the house with me or wait to see you.”²³ The old Brahman and his wife were greatly concerned to hear such bad news. “Ah,” said her mother, “to think that your mother-in-law should have died so soon after you went home with your husband! Dear knows what people will say about you. And she was the only relative our son-in-law had with him in his house. Anyhow, you’re our daughter, and it was better to bring you here than leave you in an empty house. It’s a joy to us to have you with us.” Never for a moment doubting the truth of their daughter’s explanations, the old people made no further inquiries, and their daughter stayed on with them just as before her supposed husband’s visit.

Meanwhile, the Brahman and the Kāyastha had been wandering from village to village, but not the smallest success attended their efforts. At last, the Kāyastha said, “It was at an auspicious moment that we set out the first time. This time, we must have started at a most inauspicious one.”²⁴ We’re doing no good anywhere. Everywhere, something

²³ To avoid bringing ceremonial defilement upon them. See MWR, p. 285.

²⁴ Cf. the following. The five confederate kings march against Chamarabāla, in spite of the astrologers’ declaration that there would be no favourable moment that year for commencing a campaign, and are routed by an army not more than a quarter as large as their own—KSS, I, pp. 532, 535. By starting on a journey in spite of bad omens, the Brahman youth, Vishṇudatta’s, seven companions nearly lose their lives—*ib.*, I, pp. 283 ff. The result of

turns up to baulk us. I'm sick of this. Let's go home, and make a fresh start when we've ascertained a lucky day and hour for doing so." The Brahman was only too glad to assent.

The morning after the young woman fled, when the villagers rose, they saw that the Brahman's house had been burned to the ground during the night. The women, supposing she and her mother-in-law had perished together,²⁵ began to lament the bride. "Alas!" said they, "where in all the village was there another young wife like her? To think of her coming to such an end, and so soon! Why, it was just the other day her husband brought her home; and for this! What will he say when he returns?" They were standing, gazing at the ruins and talking in this strain, when the two friends arrived on the scene. When the Brahman saw the blackened remains of his house and realized what had befallen him, he was almost beside himself with grief and remorse. "Ah," said he to himself, "I've reaped what I sowed. This is that accursed creature's doing. Well, robbery has been perpetrated on the robber."²⁶ The Kāyastha, who was standing by, said, "Brother, I'm for no more work of this kind. I've got my eyes opened." Saying this, he went away.

King Ratnādhipati's marrying Rājadattā at a time declared inauspicious by the astrologers, is that she proves unfaithful to him, precisely as they forewarn him—KSS, I, pp. 330 ff.

²⁵ With the success of the "stolen wife's" artifice, cf. KSS I, p. 61. Śrīdatta conveys a woman and her daughter into the palace, makes them drunk, fires the palace, and carries off the Princess Mṛigānkavatī and her companion. Everybody supposes that it is they that have perished.

²⁶ A favourite Bengali proverb,

The Brahman thought to himself, "What's the use of my staying here? Rather let me see whether I can't give that wretch of a woman a lesson." So, tying a short cloth round his neck,²⁷ he took the road to her village. All day, he walked straight on, not stopping even once to rest, and, towards evening, arrived at Ramesh'ör Babu's house. Stopping at the gate, he called out, "Oh, Chökröbörti Mōhášoy, Chökröbörti Mōhášoy! are you in?" The old Brahman was sitting in his verandah. He at once ran to the gate, and, seeing his supposed son-in-law, cried, "Oh, is it you, my dear Ramlochön? Come away in! Come away in! I've heard all, and am greatly grieved to know that your mother is gone. You did very right to send your wife here; very right!" Saying this, he grasped his son-in-law's hand and led him into the house. The old Brāhmaṇī wept when she saw him, and then went on to say, "But don't grieve, my dear! Who can have his mother and father with him all his life? Her time had come,²³ and she's gone. Grieving won't do any good. She was very fortunate to leave a son like you behind her. I'm sure my husband and I shall be glad to die, leaving you and our daughter behind us." After talking in this strain for a while, the old Brāhmaṇī went away to see about some refreshment for him, and her husband, just as on the former occasion, hurried to this and the other shop to fetch things. Their guest thought to himself, "So far good. She seems to have revealed nothing when she got home. The two old folks are still

²⁷ This is done by a son when father or mother dies.

²³ See Appendix, Note 1.

quite in the dark. Well, only let me manage to get her away with me again, and I'll let her see."

Meanwhile, the daughter was saying to herself, "It's all up with me! The villain has come back! He'll be wishing to take me away at once, and my parents will insist on my going. What on earth am I to do?" Suddenly an idea struck her, and, going quickly to the back of the house, she called an old woman, who stayed there. "Grannie," said she, "you'd be doing me a great kindness, if you'd get me some poison." "Poison, child!" replied the old woman, "what can you want poison for?" "Oh," said she, "our house is overrun with mice. They're spoiling everything we have. I'll mix the poison with some food, and put it down in my room. In that way, some of the vermin at least will be got rid of." "Yes, that's quite true," answered the old woman, and, going to the bazar, she presently came back with some poison, which she handed to the young woman. The refreshments had by this time been got ready, and the old Brāhmaṇī, sending a maid-servant with them to her daughter's room, said to her son-in-law, "You won't, of course, wish to take rice to-night,"²⁹ but I've sent some food for you to your wife's room. You'd better eat something, and then go early to bed, as you must be very tired after such a busy and trying day." He thanked her, and then, turning to her husband, said, "Mōhāshoy, will you be so good as to make an arrangement with some palki-bearers to-night. I must set out with my wife at

²⁹ In consequence of his mother's death, he could take only one proper meal in the day until the *śrāddha* should be celebrated, and she assumed that he had breakfasted somewhere.

daybreak. As you know, there's nobody at all in my house now." "Certainly I will," was the reply. "Leave all that to me. Now, do you go and rest, my dear fellow."

Bidding the old couple good-night, the Brahman betook himself to the daughter's room, where he found her sitting waiting for him. Almost paralyzed with terror as she was, she had pulled herself together sufficiently to mix the poison with the glass of milk which had been set ready for him. The Brahman had had nothing to eat or drink all day. Being parched with thirst, he took up the glass of milk and drank it off at one draught. He had hardly set down the empty glass, when he began to foam at the mouth, and fell writhing on the floor. In a few seconds he was dead.

"That's one thing accomplished," thought the young woman to herself. "But what am I to do with the corpse? If it's found here in the morning, I shall be dragged straight off to jail. I can't tell my parents. Yet how am I to dispose of it by myself? Well, let me see once more what Bhögöban will do for me?" She sat, thinking hard, and, before long, what seemed a feasible plan occurred to her. She rose, and put on all her ornaments; then, from amongst her *sārīs*, picking out a splendid scarlet silk one, she wrapped it about her. Also, she ate some betel,³⁰ and unfastened her hair, which hung

³⁰ Bengali, *pan-shupari*. *Pan* is the leaf of the *Piper Betel*, *shupari*, the Areca nut. A little piece of the latter, pounded small, is wrapped up along with moist lime and various spices inside the leaf, the whole being pinned together in triangle shape with a clove. This forms "a *pan*." On great occasions, it is covered with gold leaf. The immediate effect of eating *pan* is to dye the

down past her waist. The corpse she tied up firmly in one of her old *sāris*. Then, waiting till everybody in the house was certain to be sound asleep, by exerting all her strength, she succeeded in lifting the corpse upon her head, and, taking in her hand an old scimitar, which happened to be lying in her room, she made her way out. Not very far off, there was a cemetery.³¹ Thither she wended her way as fast as she could. When she reached the place, it was the very dead of night. The chirping of the crickets seemed piercingly loud. The sky was overclouded, but, now and again, a flash of lightning lit up the inky darkness and a big drop of rain fell. Now, a band of robbers happened to be sitting in the cemetery, planning together their next expedition.³² The woman would have walked straight in among them, but, luckily, when she was still some little way

saliva blood-red. The lips, gums, tongue, etc., of habitual eaters of large quantities of *pan*, are always of a very bright scarlet hue. See No. XIX, p. 157.

³¹ Place where corpses are cremated, generally beside a stream or tank.

³² Such places figure in Indian Tales as a favourite night-haunt of robbers. Cf. No. XIV, Note 3, and LDB, p. 170; CLER, p. 133. If they chanced to see a corpse on the left hand, when entering, that was a good omen. And, in such a place during the night, they were safe from disturbance by human beings. One has to remember how a cemetery appeared to the Hindu *imagination*. "It was obscured by a dense and terrible pall of darkness, and its aspect was rendered awful by the ghastly flames from the burning of the funeral pyres, and it produced horror by the bones, skeletons, and skulls of men that appeared in it. In it were present formidable Bhūtas and Vetālas, joyfully engaged in their horrible activity (of devouring corpses), and it was alive with the loud yells of jackals—KSS, II, p. 233 cf. p. 387; also, the Introduction to the *Vetālapanchaviṃśatī* or 'Vikram and the Vampire.' Robbers, as special favourites of Kālī, would, of course, feel quite secure.

off, a flash of lightning revealed them to her. They, of course, were too busily occupied to notice her. She stopped short, shaking with sudden terror. "Ah," she thought to herself, "after committing so many crimes to preserve my honour"³³ and my life, I'm doomed to lose both at the hand of those robbers. Well, I must do my best to save myself." Calling to mind Bhōgōban, and, quickly adapting her original plan to these unforeseen circumstances, she walked on straight towards the robbers. The tinkle of her anklets, suddenly falling on their ears, made them aware that a woman was approaching. But what woman could be coming to such a place on such a night—and at the very dead of night too? And what could bring her? They were consulting together thus in whispers, when she came close up to them, stood stock-still, put out her bloody-looking tongue,³⁴ and held up the scimitar. The robbers

³³ Excepting the theft from the impostor-husband's house, with which the story seems to blemish the character of the heroine quite unnecessarily, the exceptional means she used to preserve her chastity, and, with it, her caste and the honour of the real husband, who had treated her so badly, would be all but condoned by strict, old-fashioned Hinduism; just as a very ancient Israelite, no doubt, regarded as proofs of heroic self-devotion the extraordinary steps taken by Tamar and the daughters of Lot to secure the supremely important end of the perpetuation of their families.

The Hindu estimate of the preciousness and power of chastity is illustrated in such stories as that of the Water-Genius, KSS, II, p. 82. On his wife's praying and appealing by her chastity that her husband may no longer have to dwell in the water, an aerial chariot appears and carries them both to heaven. Cf. No. VIII, p. 77. Damayantī, when abandoned in the forest by Nala, is in danger of suffering violence at the hands of a hunter. Appealing to her chastity, she successfully imprecates instant death upon him—MBH, Vana P., LXIII.

³⁴ The effect of the betel. When Kālī was slaughtering the

hurriedly lit a torch, and, the moment they were able to see the strange apparition plainly, they concluded for certain it was Mother Kālī, herself. All robbers, as is well known, are devout worshippers of the goddess.³⁵ So the whole band, making the most humble obeisance, began to worship the young woman. Their captain, falling at her feet again and again, said to her, "Mother, if we gain much booty on to-night's expedition, I'll get a tongue of gold made, and dedicate it to you, and I'll have your *pūjā* celebrated with great splendour." And all of them, shouting "Victory to the Mother! Victory to the Mother!" began to walk round and round her.³⁶

demons, she waxed so furious that the earth was like to give way under her tread. The gods having failed to stop her by any other means, Śiva went and lay down in her path on the battlefield. Before she was aware, she trod upon her husband, and, when she discovered it, protruded her tongue through shame. She is commonly represented in this attitude. See MWR, p. 189, with Note. Cf. the votive offering the captain promises below. It was certainly an article more in character than the small gold boy the merchant vows to St. Joseph in GOS, I, p. 103.

³⁵ Thuggee was a notable illustration of this. Essentially, it was a cult of Kālī. The plunder was merely the reward bestowed by the goddess upon her votaries in acknowledgment of their zeal in providing human sacrifices for her. The sex of their tutelary deity made it contrary to Thuggee principles to murder women.

On what pleases a deity like Kālī, see FOD, p. 325, Note on p. 106. Also, Burke's remarks anent the alleged erection of a temple to Hastings at Benares.

³⁶ See MWR, p. 334, and Art., "Circumambulation," in Hastings' 'Enc. of Rel. and Eth.' Circumambulation of the sacred fire is part of the Hindu marriage ceremony. MWR, p. 380. Cf. KSS, I, pp. 95 and 98 f. The Brahman, Phalabhūti, by circumambulating a peepul-tree, and making offerings to it, obtains prosperity through the Yaksha that presides over it—*ib.*, I, p. 248. The celestial nymph, Tilottamā, circumambulated Śiva, and so beautiful was she that the god became four-faced in order to see her all the

When they stopped, she said to them, "Children, I am much pleased with you, and have, therefore, brought you this gift. But you must wait a little before you open it." Saying this, she threw down before them the burden she was carrying on her head, and departed. Once clear of the cemetery, she ran home with all the speed she could.

The robbers sat gazing at the bundle she had left, and said to one another, "Now we shall be able to give up this toilsome and dangerous business of robbery. With the reward the Lady of the unbound tresses³⁷ has bestowed upon us, we shall live at ease for the rest of our lives." Again and again, the captain, his voice trembling with devout emotion, made the sky and the infernal world, itself, resound with his shouts of "Victory to Kālī! Victory to Kālī!" All the band were wild with joy, picturing to themselves the gold and priceless gems which the bundle, no doubt, contained. After a while, the captain gave them leave to open it. When the corpse was revealed to their eager gaze, their anger and disgust knew no bounds.³⁸ The captain fairly shook with rage. "Who can have dared to play such a trick upon me of all people?" he cried. "No doubt, she's some abandoned slut! We must seek her out at once. Cutting her in pieces'll be too light a punishment for actually making fools of us!" Saying

time—*ib.*, I, p. 108. Cf. *ib.*, II, pp. 365, 447 and 442. According to the Pseudo-Matth., ch. xii, Mary circumambulated the altar seven times, when subjected to the ordeal of jealousy.

³⁷ Sk., *Muktakesī*—one of the names of Kālī.

³⁸ Seeing a corpse in certain circumstances might be a good omen—Note 32—but getting the present of one instead of what they expected, was another matter.

this, he ordered his men to take up their weapons and follow him, and they, no less eager than himself, seizing their swords, scimitars, spears, and what-not, hurried after him on the road to the village. There, they carefully examined house after house, but could see nothing that looked in any way suspicious. Coming at length to Ramesh'ör Babu's house, they sprang one by one over the wall of the courtyard, and found the house-door standing open. The young woman, flurried and worn out with her exertions, had forgotten to close and fasten it. Reaching her own room, she had thrown herself down on her bed and fallen asleep, just as she was. The robbers, entering the house, found their way to her room, and there she lay, still attired in the red *sāri* and golden ornaments, with the scimitar, which had slipped from her fingers, on the bed beside her. "Ah," said the captain softly, "we've caught our bird." Then he ordered four of his men to take her up, bed and all,³⁹ and carry her off as gently and quietly as possible, forbidding them on any account to stop and set her down, till they reached the cemetery. The four ruffians, seizing the legs of the bed, carried it noiselessly through the house, and were soon outside the village and well upon their way. So soundly was the young woman sleeping, that it was some time before the jolting of her bed awoke her. When she did awake, and realized that she was being borne rapidly along, she was at a loss to make out what had happened, till, hearing the harsh voices of the robbers on all sides, she became aware that she had

³⁹ So, in the story of 'The Bed,' the thieves carry off the King's daughter—SIF, p. 206.

fallen into their hands. "It's all up with me now," thought she to herself. "Unless Bhögöban himself delivers me, I'm done for." Just then, the bearers passed under a huge peepul tree, and she felt the twigs brush violently against her body. Straightway, picking up the scimitar, she seized a stout branch and swung herself as gently as possible into the tree. The bed was too heavy of itself for the bearers to notice the difference in its weight, and the darkness hid her movements from the others. Feeling about in the tree, she came upon a big hollow in the trunk, which she at once got into.

The robbers soon reached the cemetery, and, setting down the bed, saw to their amazement that its occupant was gone. The captain gnashed his teeth with rage. "Where is the woman?" he fiercely demanded of the bearers. "Master, how can we tell?" answered they. "We took up the bed on our shoulders in the house, and we've set it down here. All the time between, we noticed nothing whatever. "Perdition!" raved the captain. "To be tricked again and again by one wretched woman! But tell me: did you pass below any trees on your way here?" "Yes," was the reply. "Plenty of them." "Ah, but I mean any very big tree?" said he. "Yes," they answered, "there was one huge tree." "Then, sure enough, she's climbed up there," cried the captain. "There's nothing she's not fit to do. Do you think you could find your way back to the village by the very same road as you took, coming here?" "Certainly," answered the bearers. "Then carry me back by that road," said the captain. With these words, he lay down on the bed, which the

bearers at once took up, and set off towards the village. Presently, the captain felt twigs and leaves brushing against him, and at once called out, "Set me down, set me down! This is the tree. She's bound to be here." Standing at the foot of it, he made his men climb up. They searched all over it, but in vain. No trace of the woman was to be found. Meanwhile, she was crouching in the hollow, almost dead with fear, as she listened to the noise made by the robbers moving hither and thither among the branches. "I can't hope to escape a third time," she thought. "Another minute, and they'll have me. Well, what Bhögöban wills, must be." One by one, the robbers descended, unsuccessful, to where the captain was standing, and, furious at being disappointed, began loudly to complain that he had misled them. The last one of all happened to thrust his hand into the hollow, and, feeling the woman's body, was on the point of joyfully proclaiming his discovery, when she clapped her hand over his mouth, and said, "Don't call! What'll you gain by betraying me? Whereas it'll be to your very great profit to do as I tell you." "What do you mean?" asked the robber wonderingly. "Why," was the reply, "if you betray me, the captain, himself, will take possession of me, and you'll have your labour for your pains. But, if you keep quiet, I'll marry you, and we'll live happily together." "Bah!" replied the robber. "Who, do you think, is going to put so much confidence in a wicked woman like you? Besides, I'm not of your caste. How could you marry me, even if you wished it?" "You're a great fool," she rejoined. "What has caste to do

with marriage? Here have I put myself in your hands, and you begin gabbling about caste! However, if you won't believe me, you may break my caste here and now. Lean towards me and put out your tongue."⁴⁰ Now quite convinced that she really meant to keep her promise, the robber gladly did as she told him, whereupon, as quick as thought, she seized hold of his tongue with her left hand, and cut off the bigger half of it with the scimitar she held in her right.⁴¹ The robber fell with a crash to the ground, and rolled over and over in agony, choking and groaning. The rest of the band, convinced that the tree must be inhabited by some terrible *bhūt*,⁴²

⁴⁰ Giving him to understand that she would touch his tongue with her own and thereby break her caste.

⁴¹ With this incident, cf. KSS, I, p. 88 and Note. The cunning Siddhikari steals her master's hoarded gold and flees to the jungle. When she sees the merchant and his servants arrive in pursuit of her, she climbs a banyan tree. One of the servants ascends to see if she is there. She makes love to him, and, pretending to wish to kiss him, bites off his tongue with the same result as here. Cf., also, the curious story how the Christian virgin saved her honour, when delivered to the Roman soldier—Liebrecht, 'Zur Volkskunde,' p. 83.

⁴² Demon or goblin; strictly, the ghost of a dead person.

On the subject of haunted trees, see MWR, p. 331, MCF, p. 115, and, for some examples, LDB, pp. 201, 203, and 258; also, KSS, II, p. 365. On the special likelihood that the peepul—Sk., *āśvattha*, *Ficus Religiosa*—might be haunted, see MWR, pp. 335 f; also, KSS, I, p. 153 f. I once preached and showed Bible pictures with the magic-lantern under a peepul, affirmed by the villagers to be the abode of a Bhūt. The audience complained that one big branch obstructed their view badly. "Cut it off then," I replied. "We daren't," said they. "You may, if you like." A bill-hook was brought, and one of my people lopped the branch. When leaving, I asked the villagers whether they weren't afraid the Bhūt might pay them out. "Oh, no!" was the reply. "He knows very well that, if you wished to cut his tree, people like us couldn't

which had done their comrade a deadly hurt, fled in wild panic in all directions. The young woman waited till the sound of their footsteps had died away in the distance, then quietly descended from the tree, and made her way home. Arrived there, she went and lay down in her own room. Before long, day broke. Everybody in the house rose and began to move about. Seeing their daughter all alone, the old people asked, "Where is our son-in-law? He gave us to believe that he was resolved to take you away with him. What's become of him?" "Oh," said she, "I managed to persuade him to let me remain this time. So he went off very early, promising soon to return for me." Her parents were quite satisfied with this explanation, and their daughter continued to live happily with them as before.

hinder you. And he won't meddle with you, as he doesn't know what might happen." The leaves of the peepul quiver—like those of the aspen—with the slightest breath of air, hence often move and rustle, when those of all other trees are still. This is irrefragable, palpable evidence that a Bhūt is there. On still days, little sporadic puffs of wind seem often to travel about. A whirling column of dust scurries along the road, or the lofty top of a palmyra gives a sudden rattle. Bhūts, to a certainty! I have known cases of a man's turning back instead of going on to do his work, because a tree-top suddenly stirred on a quiet evening.

Some idea of how the robbers pictured to themselves the tenant of the peepul, may be got from KSS, II, p. 338. "At that moment, there suddenly came there a Brahman demon, black as soot, with hair yellow as the lightning, looking like a thunder-cloud. He had made himself a wreath of entrails; he wore a sacrificial cord of hair; he was gnawing the flesh of a man's head, and drinking blood out of a skull. The monster, terrible with projecting tusks, uttered a horrible, loud laugh, and, vomiting fire with rage, menaced the king in the following words, 'Villain! Know that this *aśvattha* (peepul) tree, my dwelling, is not trespassed upon even by gods.'"

VII.

NEPHEW KĀNAI.¹

IN a certain country, there lived a Brahman and his wife. The Brahman had some little landed property, and, by laboriously spending his days from morning to night in watching his servants at work in the fields, had scraped together a little money. But his wife was a very wicked woman, who had a lover, and, whatever earnings of her husband she could lay hands on, she spent in buying dainties for her lover. She gave the poor Brahman no end of trouble. At noon, when he came in from the fields, she gave him the very poorest food to eat, and, very often, a volley of abuse along with it. The Brahman was old and had no relatives staying with him, so he had to put up with his wife's tantrums as best he could.

Now the Brahman was a very devout worshipper of Vishṇu, and, in spite of all his afflictions, his zeal never abated. He continually invoked him, calling "Nārāyṇ, Nārāyṇ!"² Nārāyṇ loves his devotees. He could not bear to see the pious Brahman's misery. So, taking the form of his nephew, he came

¹ Colloquial corruption of the name Kṛishṇa.

² Sk., *Nārāyaṇa*. Now, one of the names of Vishṇu. Cf. LDB, p. 53 f.—the 'Indigent Brahman' constantly repeated the name of Durgā.

to his house. Seeing him come, the Brahman said, "Welcome, my dear! I'm an old man, I'm past working. If you won't take a little trouble to look after me, who will?" The nephew answered, "It is just for that I've come, uncle. I'll stay a long time. You shall have no more trouble." From that day, the nephew would not allow the Brahman to do any work; if his uncle needed to go to the fields, he would go, himself, and let the Brahman remain sitting comfortably at home.

One day, when he came in, he saw that his uncle had not yet bathed. He asked, in surprise, what had hindered him. The Brahman said, "Child, I could get no oil. I asked your aunt for it, but she said there was none." The nephew answered, "What?" and, going straight into the house, he brought out the fine oil which the Brahman's wife had put away to keep for her lover, and anointed and bathed the old man. This done, the nephew called to his aunt, "Aunt, bring my uncle's rice." She brought some coarse rice and sorry vegetables in a common plate, and set them before the Brahman. But the nephew, as soon as he saw this, cried, "Why bring such rice as that, aunt? My uncle can't eat that stuff. I'll eat it, myself." And, going quickly to her room, he found some fine rice, which he brought to his uncle.

The old Brahman that day dined to his heart's content. But his wife, who had been keeping that rice for her lover, gnashed her teeth with rage when she saw her husband eating it. However, it could not be helped, and, indeed, she could not well say anything. Things went on in this way for some time, when, one

day, the nephew brought home some rare dainties for his uncle. His aunt saw them, and determined that, by hook or crook, her lover should get some to eat. So she sent for him and said, "In our house, there is a large clothes' basket. Remain you inside of it,³ and, at night, I shall give you some delicious food." He agreed, and, that night, the Brahman's wife fed him as she had promised, but so watchful was the nephew that she could not get her lover out of the house. In the morning, the nephew said to her: "Aunt, there must be a very big mouse in that clothes' basket. It kept moving about the whole night. I will kill it." Saying this, he brought the basket, and, lifting it high up, dashed it violently upon the ground. The man fell out, and slunk away home, badly bruised. The Brahman's wife had to look on and say nothing, though choking with rage.

Another day, the nephew again brought home some good things for his uncle. As before, his aunt sent to her lover, saying, "Come to-day. I'll wrap you up out of sight in a mat." But he refused. She sent again, assuring him there was no danger, and, at last, he consented, and duly turned up at nightfall, when she wrapped him up in a mat. During the night, she gave him food; but the nephew was aware of all that went on. In the morning, he took up the mat, threw it down in the court, and began beating it with a stick with all his might. The man inside got a terrible mauling, but did not dare to show himself. At last, when the nephew went away, he managed to

³ Cf. KSS, I, 18 ff. Upakośā stows away her four would-be lovers in a trunk. See, also, GHT, I, pp. 266 f. and II, pp. 42 ff.

sneak off. The Brahman's wife saw all this, but she was helpless. All she could do was to abuse the nephew in her heart.

Some time after, he again brought home some great dainties, and the Brahman's wife, as before, sent for her lover, that she might give them to him. He came, but refused to stay. She said : " Don't be afraid. Remain you to-day where I keep the fire-wood. I'll put some pieces of wood on the top of you, and, in that way, you'll be perfectly safe from him. The burnt-faced scoundrel won't come into the kitchen. There I'll feed you, and then let you go, safe and sound." At length he yielded, and the Brahman's wife concealed him as she had promised. The nephew knew it all. Was he not Kṛishṇa,⁴ the heart-knower ? So he came to the kitchen, and said to his aunt : " Aunt, how is there no wood in your scullery ? Let me fetch you some." His aunt answered : " No, no, child, I don't need wood. Go to your own work. There's plenty of wood in my scullery." But the nephew, never heeding her, brought a huge load of wood, and, flinging it into the scullery upon the man's shoulders, went away. Seeing this, the Brahman's wife extricated him as fast as she could, but he was almost crushed to death by the wood. She did her best to revive him ; and, after a while, he was able to slink away home.

Another time, the nephew came in with a great big fish. Again his aunt called her lover, and said, " Remain you to-day in the ditch at the back of my

⁴ Kṛishṇa is by far the most important *avatāra* or incarnation of Viṣṇu, practically equivalent, indeed, to Viṣṇu himself, i.e., for a Vaiṣṇava, to the Supreme Being who is the All.

kitchen, and I will pour out the fish along with the rice-water through the drain-hole, so that you may get it all." He agreed, and went and took his seat where she told him. The Brahman's wife, having boiled her rice, set it to cool. But Kṛishṇa, of course, knew what she was after. Coming into the kitchen, he said, "Aunt, why is your pot full of dirty water?" and forthwith poured out the boiling water off the rice through the drain-hole. The man, who was sitting below, got the whole of it upon his face and body, and was horribly scalded. He ran away home, almost beside himself with pain. The Brahman's wife looked on, furious with rage. Thereafter, she did everything in her power to get the nephew sent home. But he put off his departure from day to day, saying, "I'll go to-morrow, I'll go to-morrow."

One day, the old Brahman said to his nephew, "Child, ever since you came, I've been very happy. I've had no trouble at all. But it's long since I celebrated my dead father's feast-ceremony.⁵ If you were to make the preparations, I would do so now." The nephew answered, "Don't let that matter trouble you, uncle. I'll make all the arrangements, and you shall celebrate the feast-ceremony." The old Brahman, greatly pleased, lifted up both his hands and blessed his nephew. Thereafter, an auspicious day having been ascertained, Kṛishṇa made everything ready. Twelve⁶ Brahmins were invited—among them, the lover of the Brahman's

⁵ *Śrāddha*. See MWR, pp. 303 ff.

⁶ Twelve is what is called a "sacred number." Its special importance is probably derived from the number of the Zodiacal signs, as that of seven is from the number of the principal planets.

wife. They all sat down to eat, he with the rest. Kṛishṇa carried round the dishes. When he was about to take round something specially nice, the Brahman's wife called him, and, pointing out her lover, said, "See, child, that Brahman sitting there is a very poor man; give him this little bit extra." The nephew said, "Very good," and, passing through the midst of the others till he was close to that Brahman, he said, "Were you inside the clothes' basket?" He answered, "Not I," whereupon Kṛishṇa came back and said, "Aunt, he won't take any." Hearing this, the old Brahman's wife said, "Go again; make him take this titbit." Kṛishṇa went up to him as before, and asked, "Were you inside the mat?" He answered, "No, no, not I." Kṛishṇa, coming back, said, "Aunt, he won't eat this either." The Brahman's wife began to shake with rage. She said, "If he won't eat this piece willingly, thrust it down his throat." Kṛishṇa, as before, went up to him and asked, "Were you among the wood?" He answered "No, no, no, not I." Kṛishṇa, coming back to his aunt, said, "He won't eat; what can I do? Whenever I ask whether he'll take anything, just hear how he keeps saying, 'No, no, no, not I.'"⁷ The Brahman's wife could say no more, and that Brahman got a very poor dinner.

When all the guests were gone, Kṛishṇa called the Brahman, and said, "Uncle, further concealment is needless; look well now who I am." Saying this, he manifested himself to the Brahman, in his four-

⁷ Literally translated, the Bengali = Not I, not I, not I. Such threefold asseveration is equivalent to the most solemn possible oath. See No. XXV, Note 5.

armed form,⁸ holding his shell,⁹ and discus,¹⁰ and club,¹¹ and lotus.¹² The Brahman, beholding the theophany of Nārāyṇ, putting his upper garment round his neck,¹³ began to chant a hymn of adoration. Then Nārāyṇ, having burnt up the woman, house and all, took the Brahman by the hand, and led him away to heaven.¹⁴

⁸ Sk., *Chatur-bhuja*.

⁹ Sk., *Śankha* = a conch.

¹⁰ Sk., *Chakra* = a sort of quoit, used as a weapon.

¹¹ Sk., *Gadā*.

¹² Sk., *Padma*. These four are the best known of Viṣṇu's insignia. Brahṇā is the creator, Viṣṇu the preserver, and Śiva the destroyer. But, for a Vaiṣṇava, all three are simply forms or states of Viṣṇu himself, just as, for a Śaiva, they are forms or states of Śiva.

¹³ See No. III, Note 9, and No. IV, Note 14.

¹⁴ See No. IV, Note 22. Cf. KSS, II, p. 483.

[Nephew Kānai, the name of the hero of this story, is the current designation for a very clever, unscrupulous fellow—one who is able, if offended, to give, in Bengali phrase, “a good lesson,” and who has no conscience to keep him from doing so.]

VIII.

THE GODDESS ITU.

[ACCORDING to the narrator of the story, on every Sunday of the month Agraḥāyaṇa—latter part of November and former part of December, at one time, the first month of the year—Bengali women perform *pūjā*—ritual worship—to Itu, who is represented by five or six small earthen pots, containing water strewn with *dūrvā* grass, and, above the latter, sun-dried rice.¹ The mistress of the house takes the lead in the celebration, and, in connection with it, relates to the other women of the household the following :] ²

Once on a time, in a certain village, dwelt a Brahman, who had a wife and two daughters. The daughters' names were Umṛo and Jumṛo. One day, the Brahman felt a strong desire to eat cakes. So he said to his wife, “Brāmhōṇī, I must have cakes to eat to-day.” “Where am I to get all the things to make cakes with ?” answered she ; “you

¹ Such is the account of the ritual, given me by the Brahman narrator. Others describe it somewhat differently.

² The connection with religious festivals of tales designed to recommend their celebration as highly beneficial or, for other reasons, specially incumbent on pious people, is very common. A well-known instance is that of the story of Esther with the Feast of Purim.

must procure them for me. If you do so, I shall prepare the cakes." Accordingly, the Brahman went and begged at a number of houses, and thus got a quantity of husked rice, milk, and date-palm sugar, which he brought home and gave to his wife. She at once began preparing the cakes.

Now the Brahman was a very great glutton.³ So he determined to keep count of how many cakes were prepared. With this end in view, he sat down at the back of the kitchen, outside, and listened attentively. Every time a cake was dropped into the frying-pan, a loud crackling noise was made. By counting these noises, the Brahman was able to know exactly the number of the cakes.

When all was ready, he went and sat down in the verandah to enjoy his feast. But, while their mother was making the cakes, the two little girls had been sitting in the kitchen, looking on. Of course, they wished to get some to eat. Their mother was afraid to let them have any, but, when she saw them weeping

³ Many of those Brahmans who subsist entirely on the gifts bestowed by the religious, are said to be great eaters. Certain devotees at Benares are declared to be in the habit of eating incredible quantities. Such a capacity is regarded as an evidence, if not of sanctity, at least of some peculiarly efficacious virtue possessed by their religion. More than once, a Bengali—illiterate, of course—has told me of those men, and proudly asked what Christian could do anything like that. I have, myself, seen an old man eat at one sitting some thirty pastry-cakes of somewhat less bulk than penny tarts, along with a corresponding amount of he-goat's flesh—say, upwards of 2 lb.—followed by sweets—about 1½ lb., perhaps—and a small Brahman boy negotiate with ease a mass of rice quite as big as his own head. One man told me that he found 2 lb. of rice, boiled, a very fair meal, but he preferred 2½ lb. As a Bengali would say—where they put it, *they* know.

bitterly, she could not help giving them one each. Well, the Brahman being seated, his wife brought him all the cakes that there were. The Brahman began to eat, keeping count all the time. At last, he saw that the number was two short. He at once called his wife, and asked, "Why is the number of cakes short?" She replied, "I've given you all I had. I haven't kept a single one." The Brahman said, "All the time you were making them, I was sitting behind the kitchen, keeping count. You made a hundred. But you've given me only ninety-eight. Where are the other two?" The poor woman saw she had better at once make a clean breast of it. If the Brahman fell into a rage, there was no saying what might happen. So she said, trembling, "Your two daughters ate two of the cakes." The Brahman said nothing. He finished his meal, and then got up and went away out. But a bitter grudge at his two little girls kept rankling in his mind.

Some time after, pretending to his wife that he wished to take the girls to visit their uncle, her brother, he went off with them. After they had gone a very long way, they found themselves in a dense forest. Then the girls said, "Father, we aren't able to walk any farther. Let us lie down here and rest a while." "Very well," said the Brahman, "do so." Then he sat down on the ground, with the children's heads on his two thighs, and put them to sleep. Once he saw they were sleeping soundly, he took two clods of earth, placed them under the girls' heads, and then, gently slipping his own legs from below them, said, "Stay where you are.

I banish you to the forest. As you ate my cakes, so may the tigers and bears eat you.”⁴ With these words, he hurried away. When he got home, he told his wife a tiger had devoured them. She began to mourn and lament wildly, for she understood quite well that, in his anger at the eating of the cakes, he had somehow made away with them. But what could she do? She had just to bear all quietly, as best she could.

Meanwhile, as evening drew on, the two girls awoke, and found themselves alone; their father was nowhere to be seen. At first, they supposed he had only gone a little way off for some reason or other, and would soon come back. But, when a good while had passed and he did not return, they

⁴ Desertion of children is a not altogether unusual incident in Folk-tales. Generally, it is done more or less unwillingly, as, in the story of ‘Punchkin,’ the Raja abandons his seven sleeping daughters in the jungle in order to save them from their stepmother—FOD, p. 12. Maria is abandoned by her father at the instance of her stepmother, which is quite in order in a Folk-tale—GOS, I, p. 5—Maruzzedda, because she will not be a party to his spending part of his earnings on food for himself and her before he goes home—*ib.*, I, p. 9. But he requires to be worked up to this by her jealous sisters. In the story of ‘Hänsel and Grethel,’ it is the mother who insists on the desertion of the children—GHT, I, pp. 62 f. It is curious that the curse should remain ineffective. Not to speak of Brahman’s, parents’ curses are almost always efficacious in Folk-tales, however causeless—cf. RRT, pp. 358 ff. The reason of the father’s deadly anger strikes a Western as trifling, for the latter finds it difficult to sympathize with susceptibilities in the matter of eating, so very lively. But, in KSS, II, p. 291, we read that the Vidyādhari, Mrigāṅkavati, was cursed by her father to be swallowed four times a month by a Rākshasa until her marriage, the sole reason being that, in her devotion to the worship of Gauri, she, one day, kept her parent, who was so fond of her that he would not eat without her, waiting till night for his breakfast, and then he was in too bad a temper to eat at all.

concluded a tiger had devoured him. So they looked about for traces of blood. None were to be seen. Thereupon the younger⁵ girl said, "No, sister, that's not what has happened. We ate father's cakes. So he has gone away, leaving us in the forest as a punishment. What are we to do now? What a dreadful forest! Night is falling. The tigers and bears are growling all around. Any minute, they may come and devour us. Oh, why did we eat the cakes! We've brought about our own deaths by doing so. However, come along; perhaps we may find some sort of shelter somewhere."

As they walked on, suddenly they saw in front of them a very big tree. So, going close up to it, they put their cloths round their necks in suppliant fashion and said, "Oh, Tree, if we are the virtuous daughters of a virtuous mother,⁶ then do you be divided in two, so that we may come inside of you." Forthwith the tree-trunk divided itself in two,⁷ and the girls stepped inside of it. Then they said again,

⁵ Almost invariably, in Folk-tales, it is the younger sister who is the wiser and more virtuous.

⁶ On the subject of the girls' basing their appeal upon their chastity, see No. VI, Note 33. Cf. Sītā's appeal by her wifely devotion, to the Earth—when her chastity was questioned and she was under ordeal at the lake, Tīṭhibhasaras. In response to it, the Earth-goddess appeared and bore her across the lake—KSS, I, p. 487. In KSS, I, p. 556, a hermit, whose angry glance at a crow for dropping dirt on him had instantaneously consumed it to ashes, tries it on a chaste wife who attended to her husband before getting food for him, but with the sole result that she laughed and said, "I am not a crow." Her chastity bestowed on her both supernatural protection and supernatural knowledge.

⁷ Similarly, in LDB, pp. 125 ff, a tree speaks to, and opens to receive the banished maiden and her nurse. Cf. *ib.*, pp. 250 ff. In Indian Tales, it is usually because some such being as a Yaksha

“ Oh, Tree, if we are the virtuous daughters of a virtuous mother, then do you become as you were ” ; and the tree immediately closed up round about them. Thus they passed the night safely inside it.

When day dawned, they got out of the tree again in the same way as they had got in, and, after bowing respectfully to it, they began to walk on. They had not gone very far, when they heard the sound of conchs being blown, and women shouting, “ *Ulu, ulu!* ” ^s Proceeding in the direction of the place the sounds seemed to come from, it was not long before they lighted upon a great crowd of women, old, middle-aged, and young, as well as girls like themselves. They asked the women, “ What is this you are doing ? ” They, on their part, astonished at the sight of the new-comers, began to say to one another, “ Who may these be ? Where in the world have they come from ? ” Presently, a very old woman, coming forward from among them, said kindly to the two girls, “ Who are you, my dears ? ” “ We are the daughters of a Brahman,” they replied, and again inquired what it was that was going on. The old woman said with a smile, “ Ah, poor girls, don’t you know what this is ? ” “ No, we have no idea,” was the reply. Then the old woman said, “ This is called *Itu-pūjā*.” “ What is the use of it ? ” they

lives in it that a tree is able to behave as the one in our story does *E.g.*, in KSS, II, pp. 82 f., a tree offers hospitality to two Brahman youths, and, forthwith, a tank with a sumptuous repast set out on its bank appears, and, after a while, the presiding Yaksha manifests himself. Cf. *ib.*, I, p. 153, II, pp. 116, with Note, and 460. A tree hears and delivers Zuhra Khotan’s message to Haya Band—KKT, pp. 182 and 184. See also, RRT, p. 205 ; MCF, p. 115.

^s The cry uttered by women on festive occasions.

asked. "The use of it?" said she. "Why, by celebrating this worship, one's heart is made good and happy; good luck, wealth, marriage into a Raja's family are attained; a pot of lime is destroyed and a pot of ghee is increased; ⁹ enemies perish and friends are multiplied. My dears, won't you also perform this holy service?" The girls answered, "Yes, we will." "Well, then," said the old woman, "go and bathe in the tank that is close by there, and come back to me."

The girls went off to bathe in the tank, as they were told, but, when they got there, they found there was no water in it. So they came back, and said to the old woman, "How's this, Mother? We found no water." Much surprised at this, the old woman at once went along with them to the tank. Sure enough, it was quite dry. Turning to them, she said, "Oh, girls, have your father and mother never done any good works at all?" ¹⁰ Then she offered a great many prayers to the gods on their behalf. Presently, the tank filled with water. The two girls then bathed, and returned with the old woman to the place where the other women were. Seeing that they wished to do *pūjā*, one gave them an earthen pot; another, some flowers; a third, some *dūrvā* grass; a fourth, some sun-dried rice, and so on; every one contributing something or other.

⁹ Ghee—Sk., *ghṛita*—i.e., clarified butter, is one of the most valued articles of food and a *sine qua non* for most sacrifices. The narrator could not explain to me why the destruction of lime should symbolize prosperity.

¹⁰ Merit—*punya*—being transferable, the daughters might have benefited, had their parents accumulated any such. See Note 17, and No. XXVIII, Note 5.

Thus the two girls were enabled to perform the rites of Itu-worship, following the old woman's directions, after which they went with her to her house. There they lived with her for some time, and continued doing *pūjā*.

One day, the two girls had gone to the *ghat* of the tank to bathe. As soon as they stepped into the water, the elder one suddenly called out, "Oh, sister, my foot has struck against something." "Well, look what it is," replied the younger. "No, I can't," said she. "You look." The younger sister came, and, feeling about with her hand in the water, drew up what turned out to be a big lump of gold. They were both greatly delighted when they saw it. They took the gold home, and got it made into a pot for the goddess Itu. Very soon, everybody was able to see that they were now the best and happiest people in the village.

Meanwhile, in their home, when their father was asleep one night, the goddess Itu appeared to him in a dream, and said, "If you don't bring back your two daughters, I will kill you by making you vomit blood. You will find them in such-and-such a place." The Brahman rose very early in the morning, and related his dream to his wife. In great joy, she exclaimed, "Then my Umṛo and Jumṛo are still alive. Go and fetch them without delay." The Brahman was only too glad to set off at once, and, before very long, reached the village in the forest where his daughters were. As soon as they saw him, they threw their arms round his neck and cried, "Oh, why did you go away? Was it right to leave us all alone in the forest? Let us go home." The

Brahman replied, "My dears, it is to fetch you that I am come. Let us start at once."

So, bidding farewell to the kind people of that village, they went away home with their father, not forgetting to take Itu's golden pot with them. Their mother was overjoyed at seeing them again. Exclaiming again and again, "You have come back, my Umro and my Jumro!" she took them up in her lap and began to weep. Then the girls made obeisance to her and said, "Oh, mother, it is by the blessing of this goddess Itu that your daughters have been restored to your arms." Thus the mother and the two girls talked together for a long time.

From the day that Umro and Jumro returned home, the Brahman began to be very prosperous. Everything he had to do with, flourished. After some time, one day, the Raja of that country came to hunt in the neighbouring forest. As the sun grew hot, he became very thirsty; indeed, he was like to die with thirst. He said to his Chief Minister, who was with him, "Minister, I must get some water to drink; my very life depends on it." "There is a village not very far off," answered the Minister, "let us go there." So they rode on slowly through the forest, and presently reached the Brahman's house. He at once recognized the Raja, and, putting his upper cloth over his neck and shoulders, saluted him respectfully and welcomed him to his house. The Raja was much pleased at being so respectfully treated, and said to the Brahman, "I am frightfully thirsty; give me some water." The Brahman at once went away and saw to water being got for the Raja and his Minister. And, on the two cups which

were to be given them to drink from, he fastened two hairs from the heads of his two daughters. When the Raja and his Minister saw the hairs, they asked the Brahman who was the father of the girls to whom they belonged. "I am," replied the Brahman. The Raja said, "Brahman, I will marry the girl to whom this hair on my cup belongs." And the Minister said, "I will marry the girl to whom this hair belongs."¹¹ The Brahman joyfully consented, saying, "Your Majesty, what greater good fortune could befall me than the taking of my daughters in marriage to-day by you and your Chief Minister?" Then he went at once into the inner part of the house, and, bringing out the girls, gave the elder, whose hair had been tied upon the Raja's cup, to him, and the younger to the Minister. The Raja forthwith summoned

¹¹ Similarly, Sahasra Dal falls in love with Keshavati, Champa Dal's wife, through seeing one of her hairs floating down the river while he is bathing—LDB, pp. 41 and 43. In CAS, p. 16, the princess finds one of the youth's hairs. In the very ancient Egyptian tale of 'The Two Brothers,' a tress of the perfumed hair of Bata's wife floats down the river, and comes into the hands of the king, who determines to make the woman to whom it belongs his wife. Cited in RRT, p. 112, and MCF, pp. 127 f. In the story of 'The Charmed Ring,' another prince falls in love with the hero's wife on seeing some of her hairs, which she had thrown in a bit of hollow reed into the stream—KKT, p. 23. Cf. CLP, I, p. 341. In 'The Godchild of St. Francis of Paula,' the lover has at least *more* reason for his passion, as he sees all Pauline's beautiful plaits let down from the top of the tower—GOS, I, p. 125. Other cases of men's falling in love at sight—of a small sample—of the lady are the following. Chandāsīṇha and his son choose wives from seeing their footprints, in accordance with their size—the result being that the father gets the daughter, and the son, the mother—KSS, II, p. 355. Cf. *ib.*, II, p. 434. A king falls in love when he sees a girl's nose-ring, found inside a fish—KKT, pp. 128 f. Cf. *ib.*, p. 135.

his servants, and they soon brought elephants, horses, palanquins, and so forth. Then he and his Minister respectfully bowed to the Brahman, and he gave them his blessing ; thereupon they placed their wives in their palanquins, and, mounting their elephants, took their departure.

Now, the Brahman's elder daughter was so elated at becoming the Raja's chief Rání that she forgot to bring away with her from home any pot for doing *pūjā* to the goddess Itu. But her younger sister¹² was careful to fetch along with her all the Itu pots. The consequence was that, as the cavalcade passed along, on that side of the highway on which the Raja and his wife rode, fiery rain fell, meteors darted about, and the howling of jackals, the wailing of mourners, and the harsh screeching of kites and vultures¹³ were heard continually, while, on the Minister and his wife's side of the road, showers of flowers fell, and the sweet songs of birds and joyful shouts, as of people holding high festival, were heard

¹² The names of the sisters are almost never mentioned. They must be a late excrescence, proper names being comparatively rare in Folk-tales.

¹³ The unwisdom of the King in continuing his journey in spite of such warnings is proved by the sequel. Especially, the falling of meteors was the premonition of some great disaster. Here are a few other references to omens. When Guṇaśarman is on his way to the court, not knowing that the queen has slandered him to the King, a crow appears on his left hand, a dog runs from the left to the right, a snake is seen on his right, and his left arm and shoulder throb—KSS, I, p. 465. When the Asura, Vidyuddhvaja, is marching out to defeat and death, lightning-flashes strike his banners, vultures circle above his head, his state-umbrellas are broken, and jackals utter boding howls—*ib.*, I, pp. 522 ff., with Note on p. 523. Cf. pp. 435, 536, and 617. See also MWR, pp. 397 f.

unceasingly. The Raja was greatly amazed, and said to himself, "What can be the meaning of this? Why is all *this* going on on my side of the road, and all *that* on the Minister's side?" He could not make it out at all, and, in great wonderment, arrived at the city where his palace was.

There he and the Minister parted, each taking the way to his own abode. As soon as the Raja reached his, the great front gateway fell down in ruins.¹⁴ When he saw all those signs of bad luck befalling him, he was terribly frightened. But what was he to do? There was nothing for it but to bear all in silence. Gradually, he became more and more unfortunate, while the Minister, on the other hand, grew more and more prosperous. At length, when the Raja had as good as lost his kingdom, when his servants had all run away, and his palace and grounds become a jungle, it was revealed to him in a dream that his wife was a Rāqhōshī,¹⁵ and he was commanded to banish her to the forest. Next day, he called his Chief Minister and said to him, "Minister, I've lost everything, and it is this wife of mine that is the cause of all my misfortunes. She must

¹⁴ Cf. LDB, pp. 41 and 43. The "lion-gate" is to fall when the prince returns with his bride.

¹⁵ Fem. of Rāqhōsh—Sk., *rākshasa* and *rākshasī*. These are ogres that "haunt cemeteries, disturb sacrifices, harass devout men . . . devour human beings, and vex and afflict mankind in all sorts of ways"—Dowson, 'Class. Dict. of Hindu Mythology.' Their proper form is hideous and terrifying, but they transform themselves at will, and the females often appear as beautiful women. See LDB, pp. 64 ff. and 270 ff. Instances of Rāqhōshīs "having actually secured men as their husbands and of human wives" being falsely accused of being Rāqhōshīs, will be found in LDB, pp. 65 ff., 117 ff., and KKT, pp. 42 ff.

be banished to the forest." What could the Minister do? It was the Raja's order. So, leading the Rānī away far into the forest, he left her there weeping bitterly.

When the Minister got home, he told his wife all that had happened. When the younger sister heard the story, she said to her husband, "You must go and fetch my sister to me." "Impossible," replied her husband. "To do that is as much as my life is worth. Should the Raja come to know of it, he would certainly have me put to death." "No fear of that," said his wife. "What power has the Raja now to do any such thing? And, even if he had, I'll keep her too well hidden for him to know anything about it. You fetch her to me." Of course, the Minister had to agree to do as his wife wished. So, next day, he went back to the forest, and, finding the Rānī where he had left her, he brought her to his wife. She received her sister very kindly, and then said to her, "See, sister, all this has befallen you through your own fault. Come now, begin doing *pūjā* to Itu again." The elder sister answered, "Yes, I will." But her nature and disposition had become very bad, and she had lost all her beauty. Anybody who saw her could tell at once that Lōqhī had forsaken her. It was only with her lips that she consented to do *pūjā* to Itu. Really, she did nothing at all.

The month of Ōgrōhayōṇ again came round, and again the younger sister said to the elder, "This time, you must do *pūjā*." Just as before, she answered, "Very good, I will." Soon after, the two sisters were sleeping together, when, suddenly, at

midnight, the elder awoke and cried, "I've had such a frightful dream. It seemed as if some one slew me, cut off my head, and rubbed my face in heaps of ashes." When the younger sister heard this, she said, "Now I understand it all. Did you eat anything yesterday, before doing *pūjā*?"¹⁶ The elder confessed she had. "Why did you do so?" the younger sister asked reproachfully. "Didn't I tell you not to?" "I didn't wish to," answered the other, "but your little boy came to me, and saying, 'Auntie, eat; auntie, eat,' pushed his sweetmeat into my mouth before I knew what he was doing." "Oh, I quite understand," replied her sister. "Wait till next Sunday comes, and I'll look after your eating, myself." She said no more at the time, but, when Sunday came round, as soon as she and her sister rose in the morning, she knotted the ends of their *sāris* together. Wherever she went, the elder sister had to go with her, and the latter could go nowhere without the other accompanying her. Thus the elder sister could get no chance of eating anything that day. The two did *pūjā* to the goddess Itu's pots, and then begged the goddess to be gracious to them.

After this, the disposition of the elder sister gradually began to improve. She now took care to do *pūjā* regularly. The consequence was that the Raja again became very prosperous. His kingdom became as great and wealthy as it had been before, and all his servants returned to him. Then, one day, he said to his Chief Minister, "Minister, bring me

¹⁶ *Pūjā* must be performed fasting, otherwise it is fruitless or worse.

back my wife." He answered, "Why, your Majesty, you banished her to the forest. How am I to get her?" "No matter," said the Raja, "you've just got to fetch her." Then, seeing there was now no danger, the Minister confessed that the Rání was with her sister.

A day was now fixed for the Rání's return to the palace. Magnificent preparations were made there for her reception, and the road from the Minister's house to the Raja's was all curtained over, so that it was like one long tent. Through it, the Rání walked back to the palace. As she went along, her foot struck against something that had been left lying on the road, and was badly bruised. The Raja got furiously angry when he saw this, and asked, "What sweeper cleaned this path to-day?" The words were hardly out of his mouth, before his servants seized and brought the sweeper. Forthwith, the Raja ordered his head to be cut off. That day, there were great rejoicings and feasting in the palace, and, with one thing and another, the Rání forgot all about doing *pūjā* to Itu till after she had eaten. Then she suddenly remembered, and, in great concern, sent her servants here, there, and everywhere, to find, if possible, somebody who had not yet eaten. One by one, they all came back and said, "Your Majesty, everybody has eaten." The Rání was in despair. But one maid-servant, suddenly recollecting, said, "The sweeper's mother has eaten nothing to-day. She was too much grieved at her son's death to do so." "Fetch her at once," said the Rání. The servants went off, all in a body, to the sweeper's mother, and said, "The Rání has called you. Come

to her at once." But the old woman answered, "Never again will I look upon the Rānī's face. It is her fault that this calamity has come upon me." The servants returned, and told the Rānī that the old woman would not come. The Rānī said, "Go to her again; tell her she has nothing to fear; only good will befall her, if she comes." They went, and, after many entreaties, succeeded in persuading the old woman to come. The Rānī received her very kindly, made a great to-do about her, and said, "Mother, do *pūjā* to Itu, as my substitute." After a great deal of such coaxing, the old woman was induced to perform the *Itu-pūjā* on the queen's behalf.¹⁷

Afterwards, the Rānī presented herself as a sacrifice to Itu for the sake of the sweeper.¹⁸ As she lay before the goddess, this revelation was made to her: "Take the water of my pot, put together the sweeper's head and trunk, and sprinkle the water upon them; thus the sweeper will come to life

¹⁷ Religious merit being transferable. I know of a case in which a Brahman who lived beside the Ganges, was paid a very fair monthly salary by an old lady that lived far inland, on condition that he should bathe daily in the Ganges, making over the supernatural efficacy of the ablution in the sacred stream to her.

¹⁸ That is, she performed what, in Bengali, is called *hōtyā dewā*, and, in Hindustani, *dharnā denā* or *baiṭhnā*. In order to compel the granting of a request, a person sits down at the door of the man or lies down before the image of the deity, from whom the boon—or, it may be, payment of a debt—is demanded, with the declared resolve to stay there and starve to death, unless the request be granted. See KSS, I, p. 73. The citizens of Ujjayinī, apprehensive that their king may kill his prisoner, the King of Vatsa, sit in *dharnā* before the palace till he agrees to spare his life. Cf. GHT, I, p. 247. The 'Two Brothers' assure their foster-father that they will not eat till he grants their request. See also KSS, II, p. 466; II, p. 532; and II, p. 553.

again.”¹⁹ Forthwith the Rání, taking the water from Itu’s pot, hurried to the sweeper’s house, and said to his mother, “Where is your sweeper?” The old woman replied, weeping, “My sweeper is in the house of Jom.”²⁰ “Oh, I don’t mean that,” said the Rání. “Where is his body?” “It’s lying in that field,” was the answer. The Rání ordered it to be brought, and, putting together the head and the trunk, she sprinkled the water upon it. The moment she did so, the sweeper came to life again. At this sight, his old mother fell down and, clasping the Rání’s feet, began to weep, saying, “Mother, who are you?” She replied, “I am your Rání. Who else should I be, mother?” Then, advising all those present to observe the worship of Itu, the Rání returned home, and ever afterwards lived in peace and comfort, performing all her duties.

¹⁹ On “Magical Resuscitation” see MCF, pp. 52 ff., 80 ff.

²⁰ Sk., *Yama*, originally the first of men who died and “found out the way for the rest to the home that cannot be taken away,” and, later, the god of the dead and of death. Like Indra, he is a deity of whom a good deal of fun is made. See, e.g., Dinabandhu Mitra’s “*Jomaloye jīyonto manush*”—“a living man in the abode of Jom.”

IX.

THE PUNDITS' DISPUTATION.

IN a certain village, there lived a Brahman, who was very stupid and ignorant. But he gave himself such airs that the simple villagers believed him to be quite a dungeon of learning. They were fishermen by caste, and he acted as their family-priest.¹ Whenever they wished to know what day of the moon or of the week it was, and the like, they used to come to consult him. So utterly illiterate was he that he found it very difficult to answer even simple questions like these, without exposing his own stupidity and ignorance. His plan was to put down on the floor of his house a piece of brick every morning after full moon up to new moon.² Thus he got a series of fifteen. He did the same from new moon to full moon. If any of his flock came in the course of the half-month to ask what day of the moon it was, he had only to count how many bits of brick he had put down and answer accordingly. In this way, he was able to maintain his reputation.

¹ Every one of the now almost innumerable castes or sub-castes has its own special class of Brahmans to minister to it, just as it has its own barbers and washermen. When a man is out-casted, his barber, etc., are stopped.

² The lunar calendar is used for all purposes connected with religion.

One day, however, two cats fell a-fighting in his house, and, as they tumbled over one another, they knocked the pieces of brick about so that some of them got lost. When the Brahman came in, he saw that his calculator was in hopeless disorder (= *ghõṇṭmõngöl*). And, as Fate would have it, that very day, some of the fishermen came to inquire what day of the moon it was. The Brahman was in a most awkward fix. He gazed despairingly at his ready-reckoner—part of it here, part of it there, part of it nowhere. What answer was he to give? At length, he came out and said to them, “Look here, you fellows, this is *Ghõṇṭmõngölé* day.” “*Ghõṇṭmõngölé* day?” they replied wonderingly. “We never in our lives heard of such a day. And you never before spoke of it, yourself.” “It’s likely enough you never heard of it,” said the pundit. “There must be a good many things *you* have never heard of. For that matter, barring one or two profoundly learned men like myself, very few pundits know about this day, not to speak of fellows like you.” “Very good, *Thākur Mōshay*,” answered the fishermen. “What have we got to do, then, on *Ghõṇṭmõngölé* day?” “Oh, a great many things,” said the pundit, warming to his subject, when he saw how it had caught on. “This is a great festival. Special *pūjā*³ has to be performed, and the priest, of course, properly rewarded; then there’s a big feast and so forth. *Ghõṇṭmõngölé Debī*⁴ instituted this day with its festival. The *pūjā* is performed in her honour.” “What like is the goddess to look at?” asked the villagers. “How are we to represent

³ Ritual worship.

⁴ Sk., *devī* = goddess.

her ? ” ⁵ “ Oh, there’s no difficulty about that,” was the reply. “ She has the form of a cat. Every family must get two clay cats made and set them up. Then the *pūjā* can be performed.”

The fishermen went away home in great glee, and soon the whole village was in a bustle of preparation for the festival. Then, everything having been got ready, the celebration of the *pūjā* with all possible pomp and show commenced. The noise of the drums and other instruments was positively deafening. It could be heard miles away. Now, it so happened that a certain Raja’s court-pundit ⁶ who was on a journey, was passing at no great distance from the village, just when the festivities were at their height. “ How’s this ? ” said he to himself. “ No festival falls on this day. Then, what’s all this to-do here for ? ” So he told his palki-bearers to carry him right through the middle of the village, instead of past one end of it. They did so, and, once inside the village, the stranger-pundit was able to see that everywhere some festival was being celebrated with the utmost enthusiasm, and that in every house were set up two clay images in the form of cats, with heaps of flowers and *bel* ⁷ leaves before them. Very curious to know what it all meant, he

⁵ Images of clay and straw are made on occasion of each *pūjā*, as its time comes round. They are dressed and adorned and, by a ceremony called *prāṇapratishthā*, the spirit of the divinity to be worshipped is caused to enter them. The *pūjā* over, by another ceremony, the divine spirit is dismissed from them. They are then stripped of their fine clothes and jewellery, and thrown away into a river or tank.

⁶ See No. I, Note 7.

⁷ See MWR, pp. 336 f., and No. IV, Note 18.

asked some of the villagers what festival it was, and what divinity they were worshipping. "Ah, *Ṭhākur*,"⁸ answered one of them with a smile, "I'm thinking you can't possess much learning. That's why you have to ask such a question. Though, in truth, it's only exceptionally learned men like our *Ṭhākur Mōshay*⁹ who know about such things. It is he who has told us to celebrate this *pūjā*." The stranger-pundit, smiling in his turn, said, "Indeed, I must confess that I'm not learned enough to know about this festival. What is it called?" The villager answered, "This is *Ghōṇṭmōngölé* day, on which *Ghōṇṭmōngölé Debī's pūjā* ought to be celebrated. That's what we're busy with." The pundit asked, "What like is her image?" "Don't you see them all about?" was the reply. "Those cats are *Ghōṇṭmōngölé Debī's* images." Hearing this, the stranger said, "Good people, in all my life, I've never met with nor heard of such a pundit as yours. I've a strong desire to make his acquaintance and have an argument with him on some subject." "You had much better not," answered the spokesman of the villagers. "It's no ordinary pundit that'll be fit to argue with our *Ṭhākur Mōshay*." "That's, no doubt, the case," said the stranger. "All the same, be so good as to go and give him my message."

The villagers, accordingly, went off to their Brahman's house at the other end of the village, and, calling him, said, "*Ṭhākur Mōshay*, whilst we were celebrating *Ghōṇṭmōngölé Debī's pūjā*, as you directed us, another pundit, just like you, with sandal-

⁸ ⁹ See No. XV, Note 2.

wood marks on his forehead¹⁰ and a little pigtail on the back of his head,¹¹ suddenly came into the village. He was in a palki, and had a whole crowd of bearers with him. He made them stop, and asked us what we were doing. He seemed to be an ignorant fellow, not a learned pundit such as you are. However, we explained to him about Ghõṇṭmõngõlé Debī's *pūjā*, but he didn't seem able to understand. However, he said, 'Go and call your Ṭhākur Mõshay. Tell him I should like to have an argument in public with him.' We advised him not to think of such a thing, but he seemed bent upon it. So we've come to inform you. It's a rare joke, isn't it?" The village pundit, hearing this, thought to himself, "Hõribõl Hõri!"¹² It looks as if my game were up. However, it won't do to let people see I'm in a fix. In that case, even the louts I do *pūjā* for, will lose all respect for me." Aloud, to the villagers, he said, "Yes, indeed, it's a good joke. Little does the fellow know what he's doing. However, take him this answer from me:—It's not my business to take the trouble to go to him. As it's he that wishes to argue, let him come here to me." The villagers returned and said to the stranger: "Our pundit says, 'Does he take me for a mere nobody, that he asks me to be at the bother of going to meet him? Let him come to me, if he desires to see me.'"¹³ Hearing this, the stranger civilly replied, "Your Ṭhākur Mõhášoy is quite right. Why should he trouble to

¹⁰ See MWR, pp. 66 f., and 400.

¹¹ See MWR, pp. 359, 374. Even when the head is not shaved, some hairs are twisted together to form the little tail.

¹² See No. III, Note 7.

come all the way here ? But I'll tell you what to do. Choose a place half-way between here and his house, and we'll both go there. In that way, your Thākur Mōhāshoy will suffer no indignity." "Very good," was the reply. "That seems quite fair." And away they went back to their own pundit, and told him what the stranger had proposed. "Very well," said he with an air of indifference. "You and he fix on the place, and let me know when everything is ready." The villagers again hurried away to the stranger, and said to him joyfully, "Our Thākur Mōshay has agreed, and says you are to choose a spot along with us. When all is arranged, he will come." "Very good," replied he. "But I know nothing about your village. You fellows choose any place you think fit. I won't make any objection to it. This is a great day for you. You'll soon see what a remarkable pundit you have among you." The villagers accordingly fixed on a spot in the middle of the main street, spread out mats and quilts, and then went and invited the stranger to follow them there. This he did at once, and, getting down from his palki, seated himself on a quilt. They next ran to their own pundit's house, and said to him, "Everything is ready, and the stranger-pundit is sitting waiting for you. The spot is midway, if anything, rather nearer your house than the place where he met us." The pundit was at a loss what further objection to raise. But a happy thought struck him at the last moment, and he asked, "How did he come to the place ?" "In a palki," was the reply. "You rascals !" roared the pundit. "Am I then to go on foot ?" "Thākur Mōshay," they

answered humbly, "how can a palki and bearers be procured in a poor village like this?" "Well, then, I won't go, and there's an end of it," said the pundit. "You may go and tell him that."

Away they went again, and informed the stranger about the new difficulty. "What a stupid lot of rascals you are!" was his reply. "What though you can't get a palki? Why not carry him here on your shoulders? Shoulders, did I say? To carry such a pundit on your heads¹³ would be too great an honour for such ruck as you." They rushed back to their own pundit, and cried, "Thākur Mōshay! Never mind about the want of a palki! We'll carry you on our own shoulders! You're a Brahman, our Guru;¹⁴ and we, for whom you graciously perform *pūjā*, what are we but your servants? It would be worth while being born, to have the honour of carrying you on our heads, let alone our shoulders! In this way, you will suffer no indignity, and we shall feel quite uplifted. Come away; what's the use of putting off any more time?" The Brahman thought to himself, "Here's a nice mess. If I go, I shall be shamed, and, if I don't go, I shall be shamed. To think how many shifts I've tried in order to get out of this business, and all to no purpose! It's impossible to make out what God is after to-day. All these years, I've got my livelihood by gulling those rascals, and now it looks as if all my tricks were certain to be exposed. However, there's nothing for it but to go. The contest must be

¹³ Like an ordinary coolie or a woman. Carrying on the shoulder may be a man's regular occupation; carrying on the head, an impossible indignity for him.

¹⁴ Religious preceptor.

decided on the battlefield.”¹⁵ So he said to them, “Wait a minute: I must dress.” He then went into his house, made great sandal-wood marks over his whole forehead, wrapt a cloth inscribed with the divine names about his body, and hung a rosary of *Rudrāksha* berries round his neck. Thus attired, he sallied forth, and said peremptorily, “Take me up on your shoulders.” Some of the strongest at once obeyed, and the procession started.

When the stranger-pundit saw them approaching, he rose politely from his seat, and stood, awaiting them. They came up close to the place, and the village pundit got down from the shoulders of his bearers. The stranger greeted him with the words, “*Agacēcha, āgacēcha.*”¹⁶ The other, who knew no Sanskrit, didn’t understand what he was saying. But, afraid of what the people might think, if he made no reply, he shouted in Hindustani,¹⁷ “You’re an *agoćcho* yourself, you blackguard!” “What on earth does this mean?” thought the stranger to himself. Then he said quietly, “*Tishṭha, tishṭha.*”¹⁸ “You’re a *tishṭhō*!” was the retort. “Your father was a *tishṭhō*! All the members of your family for fourteen generations back have been *tishṭhōs*, you scoundrel!”¹⁹ The stranger was utterly dumb-

¹⁵ Sk., *Kshetre karmma vidhīyate*. Common proverbial saying.

¹⁶ Sk., = Come. He, of course, expected the discussion to be conducted in Sk.

¹⁷ By way of being specially insulting—as if he were speaking to a servant.

¹⁸ Sk., = stop or stay.

¹⁹ Literally, wife’s brother. Reckoned a very abusive epithet. I have heard a man bring a complaint before the magistrate, because he had been called a “*syāla*.”

founded—all but speechless. “*Sthiro bhava, sthira bhava,*”²⁰ he faltered out. “You’re a *sthirobhōbō* yourself, you good-for-nothing!” roared his opponent. The stranger was unequal to continuing this novel kind of disputation any longer. He stood silent, looking down at the ground. The ignorant village audience, understanding not a single syllable that either disputant had uttered, immediately inferred from the bearing of the stranger that he had been worsted in the argument by their own pundit. That worthy, for his part, swaggered about, rolling his eyes, stroking his beard, and twisting the ends of his moustache. It was impossible to doubt that he had completely got the better of the stranger, and shouts of “Our Brahman’s victorious! Our Brahman’s victorious!” rose on all sides, till the whole village was in an uproar.

“What a confounded nuisance!” said the stranger to himself. “I’ve quite gratuitously exposed myself to a lot of vile abuse. Like enough, they’ll end by giving me a hammering. It’s high time for me to quit. Still, I should like to give the rascal a lesson before I go. I wonder how it could be done.” Turning this over in his mind, he called his palki-bearers. They brought the palki, and he was on the point of getting in, when he caught sight of a hair from the village Brahman’s beard, lying on the ground. Instantaneously, quite a brilliant idea occurred to him. He picked up the hair, wiped the dust from it, and then carefully wrapped it up in the end of his shoulder-cloth,²¹ and tied it firmly. The villagers watched this proceeding with great interest and

²⁰ Sk., = calm yourself.

²¹ See Appendix, Note 3.

curiosity. Why had the stranger taken so much trouble to preserve a single hair from their own pundit's beard? For no other reason, assuredly, but that the hair possessed some remarkable virtue, which he knew about, although they did not.

Meanwhile, the stranger had got into his palki, the bearers had lifted it, and they were just about to start, when the villagers surrounded it in a body. "Well, what is it now?" he asked. "Ṭhākur Mōshay," replied their spokesman, "you got beaten in the argument, did you not?" "So it would seem," answered the pundit. "Ah," said the villager, "now you understand how clever and learned a man our Ṭhākur Mōshay is. However, what we wished to ask, is the reason why you are taking away that hair from our pundit's beard." "Oh, I have a very special reason for doing that," replied the pundit. "You noticed, I daresay, how glad I was to find it, and what care I'm taking of it. That's because that hair possesses wonderful virtue." "What sort of virtue?" they asked. "Do tell us, Mōshay." "What's the use of my doing that?" was the reply. "You can't get any more like it. I got the opportunity of picking up one hair by a lucky chance, because it had fallen out. So long as it was in his beard, it couldn't be got at." "You tell us the virtue of the hairs," they persisted. "There's no saying how we may manage to get them." "Well," answered the pundit, "what's remarkable about the hairs is this: all your pundit's cleverness and learning, which you rightly admire so much, lies in them. Whoever can obtain a single one of those hairs, will become as great a pundit as

your Thākur Mōhāshoy is, himself, he'll never want for anything, the Raja will pay him all honour, and everybody will talk about him as a nonsuch. Nor is that all. Those hairs possess many other virtues—more than I've time to tell about. If ever you're lucky enough to obtain the hairs, you'll come to know all about them, yourselves. Ah! if you could only get one each! If you don't believe me, ask him for one. I bet he won't give it. He knows too well how precious those hairs are, and doesn't wish you all to become as great men as himself."

Hearing all this, the villagers at once rushed across the road to their own pundit, who was just about to return to his house, and cried, "Thākur Mōshay, be kind enough to give each of us a hair from your beard!" "What good will that do you?" was the reply. "Who ever heard of such a thing?" This answer convinced them that the stranger had spoken the truth. "Oh, but you must give us them," said they. "Pluck out the hairs from my beard and give them to you!" he retorted. "Confound your impudence; I'll do no such thing." But, the more unwilling he showed himself to give away the hairs, the more assured became the applicants of their extraordinary virtues, and the more determined, by hook or by crook, to obtain them. Soon they could no longer restrain themselves. They seized him, and began to tear out the hairs from his beard. The news of their magical qualities reached the rest of the crowd that had already dispersed to their homes, and they came trooping back, eager not to miss the great opportunity of their lives. Jumping on the poor Brahman's back, they, too, began to

tug at his beard. "Help ! Help ! Murder ! Murder !" he shrieked, frantic with pain. "See you don't miss your chance, good people !" cried the stranger. "You'll never get another like it again. And, by the way, I had quite forgotten ; the hairs of the moustache are even better than those of the beard. So nobody needs to go without." By this time, there wasn't much beard left for the last comers. These now turned their attention to the moustache. Before long, the pundit was lying half-dead on the road. Chuckling gleefully to himself, the stranger gave his bearers the word, and, in a minute or two, the palki had disappeared.

X.

THE FOUR POETS.

IN a certain village lived four brothers. Though they were Brahmans, they could neither read nor write, and were quite unable to earn a pice in any way whatever. They were all married, and their wives, who, far from getting fine clothes and ornaments, often had next to nothing to eat, were constantly grumbling. "See how many Brahmans go to the Raja's darbār," they used to say, "and, for simply reciting a verse or two, receive splendid presents. Why don't you do the same?" "We aren't clever or learned enough to compose verses," they would answer. "So how can we go to the court? And what would be the use of it, if we did?" But their wives were not to be put off with any excuses whatever. So, at last, one day, the four brothers had to promise they would go to the Raja's, each recite a verse, and bring home a lot of rupees.

Accordingly, they set off for the palace, and, reaching it, made their way into the hall of audience. Seeing what appeared to be four Brahman pundits enter, the Raja welcomed them with great courtesy, and inquired the cause of their honouring him with a visit. "We have come to recite verses, Your Majesty," was the reply. "Ah," said the Raja,

“I’m sorry that the darbār is just on the point of breaking up for to-day. Come back to-morrow, and I shall be delighted to hear your verses.” The four departed, and, procuring a lodging near the palace, they passed the night there. Early in the morning, they rose and went to a neighbouring tank to wash their faces and hands. Then they said to one another, “We’ve got to recite verses before the Raja to-day. But we haven’t yet composed any.” This was a serious consideration, so they sat down beside the tank, and proceeded to rack their brains. Presently, the sun rose, in colour a brilliant red. Seeing it, the eldest brother suddenly exclaimed, “I have it! My verse is ready.” “What? What?” cried the others. “Let us hear it.” He pompously recited the following:

“In the east, the rising sun I see,
As like a copper pan as can be.”

The others listened with admiring envy, and then resumed their meditations. After a while, as the second brother gazed all round, his glance lighted on the garden from which flowers were supplied to the royal household. It was full of beautiful white blossoms. All at once he called out, “I have it! My verse is ready, too!” “Let’s hear it! Let’s hear it!” said the others. With a great air, he recited:

“The flowers that in this pretty garden spring,
Are just as white as a paddy-bird’s wing.”

Just then, the third brother noticed a bit of *śola*¹

¹ *Aschynomene paludosa*, a water-plant, called by some the Indian cork, the stems of which, being very light, are used for making net-floats, sun-hats, toys, etc. *Sola* can absorb an enormous quantity of water.

floating in the tank. He rose, and, picking it up, gave it a twist. Being saturated with water, it had swollen very thick. When the water was squeezed out, it became quite thin again. Seeing this, the third brother, too, got an inspiration, and called out, "I have it. My verse, too, is ready." "Oh, let's hear it," said the others, and he, in the most dignified manner possible, recited :

"This *śola*, so thick when the water was in,
The moment I wrung it, became very thin."

They sat on a while longer, waiting for an inspiration to come to the youngest brother, but in vain. Time was passing. So they got up, bathed and breakfasted, and set off for the palace. The three eldest were in high spirits. Already, they saw in fancy the surprised and delighted Raja ordering hundreds of rupees to be given them as rewards, and heard the cries of joy with which their wives would welcome them on their return home. The youngest was in the lowest depths of despair. The Raja received them as politely as he had done the day before, and, after he had seated them in places reserved for persons of distinction, invited them to recite their verses. The eldest got up, and, with the utmost assurance, delivered himself of his sloke. The Raja, in great disgust, ordered him to be turned out of the hall. The second brother then rose. Notwithstanding the reception his brother's verse had met with, he had no doubt his own was the right thing. But it was no sooner out of his mouth than the Raja signed to one of his attendants, and he, too, was bundled out. The self-complacency of the third was

still unshaken. He rose, and solemnly gave forth his verse, but had scarcely finished, when he felt a hand on the back of his neck, and, almost before he knew what was happening, he found himself outside the door.

As he sat, watching proceedings, an inspiration had come to the youngest brother. He rose and said, "Your Majesty, shall I recite my verse?" "Please yourself," answered the Raja, who was by this time thoroughly annoyed. "You see what your brothers have received for reciting theirs. If you're not afraid of getting the same, say away." "Oh, I may as well risk it," said he, and recited the following :

"In truth, we stupid brothers four
Are as many bullocks² and nothing more."

"You've hit it," said the Raja, with a hearty laugh. "You really deserve a reward." Then he ordered a hundred rupees to be paid him at once, and promised to see that he shouldn't want in the future.³ With this, he dismissed him, and the four brothers returned to their homes.

² Bengalis use the word for "bullock" as we do "donkey."

³ We have here, no doubt, an instance of the successful, but the hero, himself, would hardly call it one of the "clever," youngest son.

XI.

THE TWO-FOOTED CATTLE.

THE Raja of a certain country asked one of his friends, who was Raja of another country, to send him three two-footed cattle. This Raja said to his Chief Minister, "Where in the world am I to find two-footed cattle?" The Minister answered: "Mōharaj, you need have no anxiety on that score. There are plenty to be found in your own kingdom." The Raja said: "What do you mean?" The Minister answered: "I shall bring some and let you see." With these words, the Minister went away, and soon returned from the neighbouring village with three pundits, who possessed profound knowledge of the Śāstras. Seeing them, the Raja said to the Minister, with a smile: "Minister, these are what you mean?" "Yes, Mōharaj, these," answered the Minister. The Raja, though somewhat astonished, then said to the learned Brahmans: "Such and such a Raja desires to see you. He is a great friend of mine. Do me the favour of visiting him." With these words, the Raja gave them some money for the expenses of their journey. The Brahmans took the money, gave the Raja their blessing, and returned, each one to his own house. Then, after ascertaining a fortunate day and fortu-

nate moment for beginning their journey, they started to visit the other Raja.

They had travelled some distance, when, on reaching a certain village, they observed that it was getting rather late, so they resolved to have something to eat before going further. Sitting down at the foot of a tree not far from the bazar, they deliberated which of them should go to buy what they wanted. At last, choosing the pundit who was learned in the medical Śāstras, they gave him a rupee, and sent him off to make the bazar. When he reached the shops, he began to look carefully at everything that was for sale. At length, after much pondering and hesitating, he bought three vegetables, for which he paid the whole of the rupee. He returned with his purchases to his companions. They, after having had nothing to eat the whole day, were very angry when they saw him coming back with nothing but three vegetables. But the pundit said : “ There was nothing else I could bring.” Then he quoted to them this verse from the medical Śāstras : “ Fish induces two of the three unhealthy states ; *pōṭol* dispels all three.”¹ Having recited the verse, he said, “ Do you think I study the Śāstras all day, and don’t know what things would make a man ill, if he eats them ? I knew what I was doing when I bought the vegetables. Come, let us eat—there are three of us, and there are three vegetables, one for each. There’s no fear of their doing us any harm.” What could they do ? As he could get nothing else, each took a vegetable, and ate it.

Having thus rested and refreshed themselves, they

¹ Sk., “ Kāphapittakaro matsyaḥ, paṭolaṁ tridoshaṁ haret.”

began their journey again. They had not gone very far before they came to a little river. They could see no way of getting across. However, they happened to have one servant with them, so they sent him away to look for a boat. He went about searching in every direction, but could find none. After a while, he returned and told them so. For a long time, they sat deliberating on the bank of the stream. While they sat, suddenly they observed a banyan leaf come floating along. Then one of the pundits, who was learned in the ancient religious Śāstras, said: "When the earth was overwhelmed by the deluge, then the Supreme God himself reposed upon a banyan leaf.² This banyan leaf, then, may well take us across. Come, let us embark upon it!" Following his advice, all three, along with the servant, stepped on to the banyan leaf. In an instant, they had all tumbled into the water, but, with great difficulty, the three pundits managed to get across by swimming. The servant, poor fellow, having a heavy bundle upon his head, was unable to swim. Floundering about, he began to sink. Then one of the pundits, who was learned in the astrological Śāstras, said, "It's all up with him. I made a calculation, and found that he had come under the power of Saturn." Hearing this, another of the pundits quoted the verse from the Śāstras, "In time of great danger, the wise man lets go half his property."³ He added, "We must, therefore, be content to save

² The banyan is very appropriately sacred to *Kāla* or Time. See MWR, p. 331. Lakshmi appeared at the Creation, floating on the expanded petals of a lotus. Cf. SIF, Note 7 on p. 290.

³ Sk., "Sarvvanāśe samutpanne arddhvaṁ tyajati panditaḥ."

half of this fellow." So saying, he took a knife and cut off the poor man's head, which he kept, while the river carried the body away down.

They now hurried on as fast as they could, but it was evening when they arrived at the palace. Late though it was, they did not enter at once, for they reflected that all times are not auspicious for having audience of a Raja. Accordingly, they bade the astrologer calculate and ascertain a fortunate moment. He did so, and then said, "Shortly after midnight, there will be an auspicious time." So they all sat down in a secret place to wait till the lucky moment should arrive. Midnight came, and they rose up to go to meet the Raja. Then, as they went along, one said, "We ought to approach the royal presence by some hidden way." They, therefore, betook themselves to the back of the scullery,⁴ and got into the palace by the drain.⁵ Once inside, they went straight upstairs, and found, of course, that the Raja had retired to rest. They sought out his room, where they saw him lying upon one couch, and his Rāñī upon another.

All at once, something seemed to strike one of the pundits, and he said: "We have defiled ourselves by contact with the scullery-drain. Before we present ourselves to the Raja, we must bathe. But where are we to get water?" Hearing this, another said, "Let us see whether there is no scriptural precept to guide us." The third pundit at once ran down and, opening his book, searched through it for a long time. Then, returning, he cried: "Yes, yes! There

⁴ Bengalensis verbi proprius sensus = latrina.

⁵ Cf. Bhögöban's procedure in No. XIII.

is! There is! The Śāstra is a mine of gems. Whatever one seeks there, he finds. In my book, it is written that a woman is like a river. Then, here is this Rāñí, she is the same as a river. Come, let us go to the Rāñí and bathe." Forthwith, the three began jumping and tumbling over the Rāñí's couch. The noise awoke her with a great start, and the Raja also awoke. He was astonished to see three men in his room. He asked them, "Who are you?" Then they, having addressed the Raja in the hymn of salutation from the Śāstras, told him all about themselves and the reason of their coming. The Raja laughed heartily at their story, and said, "In very truth, my friend has sent me what I asked for.⁶ But do you, venerable sirs, go and rest now. To-morrow, when the court assembles, I shall dismiss you with all due form." With these words, the Raja gave them leave to go for the present.

⁶ Similarly, the chanter of the Sāma Veda, who makes a great fool of himself when he tries "fast" life, is called a two-legged cow—KSS, I, p. 35. In KSS, II, pp. 91 f., a boy is scratched by monkeys in a forest, and tells his father that some hairy creatures that live on fruits, have injured him. The father goes and finds some Brahman ascetics with long matted hair, picking fruit, and is about to kill them, when a stranger comes up and stops him. This, however, was no joke, but a case of *bona-fide* mistake.

XII.

KANGALA.

ONCE on a time, in a certain village, there lived a Brahman and his wife. One day, the Brāhmaṇi felt a very strong desire to get some *rui*¹ fish to eat. So she said to her husband, “Thākur, if only you could bring me a *rui* fish, I would eat it and satisfy the longing of my heart. Oh, I would give anything for a bit of *rui*.” Seeing his wife had taken such a fancy for *rui* fish, the Brahman had, of course, to promise to do his best to get her some. So he begged from house to house till he had collected as much as two rupees, with which he went to a fish-shop in the bazar. There he picked out a huge *rui* fish, which he bought, and, going to some other shops, he procured suitable vegetables and other things to be eaten along with it. All the articles together made up a rather heavy load, so he had to look about for

¹ Sk., *rohita* = red, a fresh-water fish, which—especially, the head—is considered very good eating by Bengalis. It grows to a large size, and, in an orally current Sk. sloke, figures as a model of modest dignity :

“Agādhajalasanćārī na garvaṁ yāti rohitaḥ,
Anguṣṭhodakamātreṇa sapharī pharpharāyate.”

“The *rui*, moving about in the deepest water, never becomes proud; the *sapharī* (which is no bigger than a minnow) makes a great splashing in water only a finger’s breadth deep.”

a coolie to carry them home for him. He had great difficulty in finding anybody. One coolie after another refused to go. At last, a man who was standing by, said to him, "Thākur, if you promise to give me one meal of that *rui* fish to eat, I'll carry home your bazar for you." "Very good," said the Brahman. "Come along, then. What's your name?" "Kangala," said he; and, taking up the load on his head, he set off after the Brahman.

When they got to the house and the Brahman displayed his purchases, his wife was overjoyed at the sight of the *rui* fish, and at once was seized by an irrepressible desire to go and boast about it to her neighbours. So, off she went to her nearest acquaintance and began calling out, "Sister, sister, can you lend me your cutter? My Brahman has brought home a huge *rui* fish. It's such a size that our own cutter is of no use for cutting it up. So I've had to come to you." "There's my cutter," said her neighbour, pointing to it. "Take it by all means." The Brāhmaṇī looked at the cutter and said, "Ah, that won't do. It's scarcely any bigger than our own." Saying this, she went away to another of her acquaintances, and, telling her the same story about the *rui*, asked for the loan of her cutter. But, as soon as the woman offered it, she refused to take it, saying it wasn't anything like big enough. In this way, she went round a good many houses, then, returning home, she cut up the fish with her own cutter, boiled a large quantity of rice, fried the fish and the vegetables, and served up supper. First the Brahman, then she, herself, made a most hearty meal. Afterwards, she put aside what remained of the various eatables,

tidied up, and, going inside along with the Brahman, lay down to rest.

Kangala felt grievously disappointed, but he tried to comfort himself, thinking, "After the Brāhmaṇī has rested for a little, she will get up and give me food." Presently, they both fell asleep. Still Kangala said to himself, "She must have been very tired, with all that cooking to do and nobody to help her. When she awakes and feels refreshed, she'll no doubt come and give me something to eat." After a while, the Brahman awoke, and called out, "Kangala, tell me a story." "Well, I never!" thought Kangala to himself, and he began to say, as if speaking to himself, "The deer goes on three legs. Who can catch his tail?" "What's that you're saying?" asked the Brahman. "Where is the deer?" "Oh," replied Kangala, "it's one that I saw pass along the road this very minute." The Brahman jumped up, seized a stick and hurried out, hoping to catch the deer. A little later, his wife awoke, and cried, "Kangala, where in the world has the Brahman gone?" "Oh," he replied, "how should I know? A pretty girl came here, and the Brahman got up to speak to her. Then they went off, talking to one another, in that direction," pointing with his hand. "The burnt-face! The big fool! It's just like him. But I'll let him see whether he'll play such tricks on me for nothing!" screamed the Brāhmaṇī; and, snatching up her broom, she hurried off in pursuit of him.

Finding the coast clear, Kangala at once proceeded to the kitchen, and, taking a good supply of rice from the pot, and fish and vegetables from the frying-pan,

began to eat, making the very most of his time. After a while, the Brahman and his wife returned. Seeing a light burning in the kitchen, they came straight to the door and found Kangala busily employed on the rice and the fish. "You rascal! What are you doing here?" cried the Brahman in a great rage. "You've spoilt all the food I had here."² "Why, Mōshay," answered Kangala, "all this time, I've been looking at your face, expecting you would give me something to eat, but in vain. So, getting a good opportunity, I've made bold to help myself." "Well, you'll have to go to court and answer for this, you blackguard!" cried the Brahman. "Come along with you!" "Come along," replied Kangala, quite cheerfully. The Brahman tied a rope to one of his hands, and they set off.

They hadn't gone very far, when Kangala, seeing a shop where cooked food was sold, near at hand, said to the Brahman, "Ṭhākur Mōshay, please let me go for a little. I wish to buy something at that shop." "Very well," said the Brahman, and he released him. Going up to the shopkeeper, Kangala asked the price of some little baskets of parched rice. "Eighty cowries³ each," was the reply. "I've only seventy-nine," said Kangala. "I won't sell for seventy-nine," replied the shopkeeper. "I'd rather get my eighty cowries with a slap on the face into the bargain than let one go for a single cowrie under the proper price." Kangala went away, and soon got another

² Kangala was, of course, a man of very low caste. I have heard his like abused most heartily for polluting a Brahman's pot of water with his *shadow*.

³ On cowries, see No. XX, Note 12.

cowrie by begging ; with which he came back, and, paying the shopkeeper his eighty cowries, he took one of the baskets, and then, with all his force, hit the man a slap on the cheek. "What's that for, you rascal?" he cried. "How dare you strike me?" "Why," replied Kangala, "didn't you say that, if you were paid eighty cowries, you would be contented to take a slap into the bargain, but you wouldn't sell the baskets of rice for a single cowrie less than the proper price? Well, I've given you eighty cowries for a basket and a slap into the bargain. What have you got to complain about?" "Confound your impudence!" cried the man, ruefully rubbing his injured cheek. "You'll have to answer for this in the Raja's court. Come along, you scoundrel!" "All right, come along," said Kangala, quite happily. The Brahman had already fastened a rope to one of his arms; the shopkeeper now tied one to his other arm, and the two led him away between them.

Presently, Kangala again said to the Brahman, "Ṭhākur Mōshay, please let me go for a minute. I should like to soak some of my rice in water and eat it." The Brahman and the shopkeeper consented, and let go the ropes by which they were leading him. Close by stood a house. Kangala went up to it, and saw a Brahman sitting at the door. "Ṭhākur Mōshay," said he to him, "would you be so good as to give me a plantain leaf?" Now the Brahman had just come out of his house after having a violent quarrel with his wife. So he said to Kangala, "Go and ask for one from that daughter of a dung-eater inside." ⁴ Kangala went into the house

⁴ "Son or daughter of such-and-such" is one of the most common

and began to shout, "Oh, daughter of a dung-eater ! Oh, daughter of a dung-eater, come and give me a plantain leaf." Hearing this, the Brahman at once came into the house and said angrily to Kangala, "You rascal ! What do you mean by using bad language to my wife ?" "Why," replied Kangala, as if greatly surprised, "didn't you say to me yourself, 'Go and ask a plantain leaf from that daughter of a dung-eater inside ?' Of course, I supposed that was my venerable mother's name and, therefore, called her by it." "All very fine," said the Brahman. "You'll see whether that kind of excuse will go down with the Raja. Come along to the court." "All right, come along," replied Kangala, showing not the slightest concern. The Brahman was about to tie a rope to his arm, but Kangala said, "You mustn't do that. Two men have already fastened ropes to my two arms. You had better put your rope on one of my legs." The Brahman did so. Then all three took hold of their ropes, and the march to the court began again.

By and by, they fell in with an oil-dealer. "Brother oil-dealer," said Kangala, "how far is it to the palace ?" "If you go on as you're doing now," replied the oil-dealer, "it'll take you all your time to get there before the court rises, but, if you go quarrelling, you may arrive a little sooner." "Well," said Kangala, "my quarrel with these fellows has grown stale by this time. I'd better pick a fresh one with you."

formulae of abuse in the East. A European newly-arrived in India is rather puzzled when one of his servants complains that another has been abusing his mother. He means he has called *him* "Son of a pig," or the like.

Saying this, he hit the oil-merchant a blow on the cheek as hard as ever he could. "What are you doing, you scoundrel!" roared the man, furious with pain. "Come along with you to the court." "Come along," said Kangala, holding up his free foot. The man angrily tied a rope to it, and the procession moved on again.

Before they reached the palace, the assembly in the hall of audience had broken up. So the four complainants with the culprit had to find quarters in the neighbourhood for the night. Next morning, after the officials had assembled and the Raja had taken his seat, they appeared in court. The Raja told his Chief Minister to hear and decide their cases. He called upon the Brahman whose fish Kangala had carried, to state his complaint. The Brahman related his whole story with full particulars from beginning to end. The Minister heard him out, then said, "Brahman, in this matter, you are in the wrong. You did not fulfil your bargain with him." Turning to the shopkeeper, he asked, "What have you got to say against the accused?" The shopkeeper told his story. The Minister said, "Shopkeeper, in this matter, you are in the wrong. You invited him to strike you and he did so." The other Brahman was then called upon to state his case. Having heard all he had to say, the Minister pronounced his decision: "Brahman, in this matter, you are in the wrong. He only followed the example which you set him." The oil-merchant was now asked what complaint he had to bring against Kangala. He related in detail what had occurred. Having heard him out, the Minister said, "Kangala,

in this matter, you are in the wrong. You must pay a fine of eight annas.” Kangala had one rupee in his possession and no other money whatever. He threw it down before the Minister and gave him a sounding slap on the cheek. “You villain!” roared the insulted grandee. “What do you mean by striking me?” “Incarnation of Justice,”⁵ Kangala answered humbly, “I had no money but that one rupee. How was I to get change for it here? So I gave you a slap. That makes things square—for one slap, a fine of eight annas; for two slaps, a fine of one rupee.” The Raja laughed heartily, and dismissed Kangala and his accusers.⁶

⁵ Hindu equivalent for “Your Worship.” Still in common use in British courts in India.

⁶ Cf. the story of Dandlin in STT, pp. 31 ff. *E.g.*, Dandlin is asked to stop a runaway mare. “How?” he asks. “Anyhow,” is the answer, whereupon he throws a stone at its head and kills it.

XIII.

WHAT WILL CO-OPERATION NOT EFFECT ?

ONCE there was a Raja who had a minister called Bhögöban. He was a great favourite with the Raja—indeed, the Raja had a far greater regard for him than for any other of his officials. Bhögöban had originally been appointed to a very humble post in the royal service, and owed his unusually quick promotion solely to his great abilities and incorruptible fidelity to his master. Naturally, the high favour in which he stood with the Raja, and, still more, the extraordinary rapidity of his rise to power and dignity, made Bhögöban anything but popular with his colleagues, not to speak of those who, only a short time since, were his superiors, but now were his subordinates. Above all, the Minister who used to be the Raja's chief confidant, but, since Bhögöban's rise, was rarely consulted by him on matters of first-rate importance and, consequently, found his influence and consideration dwindling day by day, simply could not bear the sight of the rival who had supplanted him.¹

At last, when he could endure his position no longer, he secretly called together a number of his

¹ With the intrigue against Bhögöban and its motive, cf. Daniel, Ch. VI, and 'Bakhtyār-Nāma,' Ch. I.

colleagues whose grievances were only less than his own, to consider what was to be done. All were clear upon one point—namely, that there was no possibility of their regaining their old power and opportunities, so long as Bhögöban remained in the Raja's service. But how were they to bring about his downfall? There never was any opportunity of getting at the Raja alone. Except when he withdrew to the Rání's apartments, he and Bhögöban were constantly together.

After much debating, they hit on a plan which promised to be successful. A letter was despatched through the post to Bhögöban, purporting to come from his native village and informing him that his aged mother was dangerously ill, in fact, not expected to recover. On receipt of this letter, Bhögöban immediately hurried to the Raja and begged leave of absence that he might go at once to his home. The leave was, of course, granted, and he took his departure at once. The confederates then went to the Raja's durwan, and, offering him a huge bribe, said, "The next time Bhögöban comes and seeks admission to the royal presence, you must say to him, 'The Raja is very angry with you and has strictly forbidden me to allow you to enter the palace. Not only that; he has given orders that, as soon as you appear, you are to be expelled from the city?'" The durwan, to whom the bribe they offered seemed quite a fortune, and who, moreover, remembered with great soreness the time, not so long ago, when Bhögöban was no better than a durwan, himself, was easily enough persuaded to do what the plotters asked.

A day or two later, some of them went to the Raja, and, putting on the appearance of very grave concern, said to him, "Your Majesty, Bhögöban, himself, has fallen ill in his village home, and the doctors have given him up." This news distressed the Raja beyond measure, and he at once sent off messengers to bring him the latest information about the condition of his beloved Minister. The messengers, however, were got hold of by the confederates, and, being speedily persuaded in the same way as the durwan had been, returned in a day or two to the palace, and reported to the Raja that the news of Bhögöban's illness was correct, and that he was now at the point of death. The Raja was so grieved that he declared he would go himself to see his favourite, and ordered preparations to be made for his journey without a moment's delay. His attendants began rushing hither and thither to execute his orders, when another messenger—sent by the plotters—arrived, as if come in hot haste from Bhögöban's village, and said, "Your Majesty, it's all over. Bhögöban is dead." At this news, the Raja was overwhelmed with grief, and gave orders that an ample allowance should be made from his treasury for the maintenance of the deceased Chief Minister's family.

The confederates waited a few days, then another messenger appeared before the Raja and said in great excitement, "Your Majesty, Bhögöban has become a *Bhūt*² and is working terrible mischief to the people

² "Bhūt" is a somewhat loosely used popular term. Here, obviously, it denotes a demoniacal being personally identical with the deceased—like the *Brahmadāitya*, LDB, pp. 201 ff.—

of his village and the neighbourhood. Your Majesty will have to be very cautious, especially towards nightfall, as the *Bhūt* is sure to come on here before long." This report threw the Raja into a perfect fever of alarm, and he made up his mind to take the greatest care of himself.³

Meanwhile, Bhōgōban had reached his home and found that the intelligence contained in the letter was all a fiction. "Aha!" he thought to himself, "this is my enemies' doing. They must be up to some game." He spent some days with his relatives, and then returned to the city. Next morning, he went as usual to the palace, and was passing in, when, to his great surprise, the durwan stopped him rudely and said, "His Majesty has strictly forbidden me to admit you to his presence. Not only that, he's given orders to the police that you're to be turned out of the city. Just take yourself off, and be quick about it." "Hōribōl, Hōri!" thought Bhōgōban to himself. "This is something worse than I looked for. It looks as if it were all up with me. But I've done no wrong whatever. What in the world can be the meaning of the Raja's having given such cruel and unjust orders about me?" He tried to find out what had happened, by questioning one courtier after another, but every one simply confirmed what the durwan had said.

Bhōgōban now saw plainly that his only hope lay in securing a private interview with the Raja. He

not one personally distinct from him, animating his corpse, which the King, of course, would believe to have been burnt.

³ The Raja, though well-meaning, is a good deal of an imbecile, as the kings in Eastern tales often are. Cf. CLER, p. 123, Note.

knew that, if he could only meet him face to face, he would have no difficulty in convincing him that he had no real cause for being displeased with him. But how was an interview to be obtained ? It would be possible only by his availing himself of some secret means of access to the Raja, as all the usual avenues were absolutely closed. Now, he was intimately acquainted with the Raja's personal habits, and knew that he was accustomed to go alone, about the same time every evening, to a certain place within the precincts of the palace. Accordingly, he determined somehow to make his way to the place, unobserved, and thus get a few words in private with the Raja.

He carried out this plan at the very earliest opportunity. Unfortunately, the way he had to take in order to reach the place without anybody's seeing and stopping him, was such that his dress got all soiled and disarranged. Hence, when he reached it, his appearance was terribly dirty and dishevelled.⁴ The Raja was startled when he heard somebody approaching him in circumstances in which his privacy had never been disturbed before. "Who's there ?" he called out sharply. "It is I, Bhögöban," replied the Minister, coming up to him.

As we know, the Raja had heard that Bhögöban after his death had become a *Bhūt*. So, when he beheld a fearsome-looking figure appear before him—and at dusk, too—calling himself Bhögöban, he didn't for a moment doubt that this was the *Bhūt*. Shrieking, "Help ! Help ! Bhögöban's *Bhūt* has seized me !"

⁴ See No. XI, Note 5. Cf. 'Bibahö-Bibhraṭ,' Act II, Sc. 3, where the missing bridegroom's father speculates as to whether his son may not have disappeared by some such way.

he rushed from the spot, frantie with terror, while his attendants, hearing his cries, came running from all quarters. Bhōgōban saw that, if they caught him, he would be a dead man within a few seconds, and so his only course was to make himself scarce as quickly and stealthily as possible. Accordingly, he made off at once, leaving the Raja firmly convinced that he had become a *Bhūt*, and no mistake about it.⁵

⁵ "The united machinations of a number of people made a Bhūt of Bhōgōban," is a common Bengali proverb, which means, according to the narrator, that union can effect even the apparently impossible. Cf. the co-operative fraud in the third story of 'Panchatantra,' Bk. III. A Brahman is carrying away a fine fat goat to sacrifice it. Three rogues, one after another, meet him and assure him it is a dog, a dead child, and an ass, with the result that he at last throws it down, declaring it must be a Rākshasa in goat-form. For parallels, see Benfey, 'Pantschatantra,' I, pp. 355 ff. In the form in which Macaulay cites the story in the beginning of his critique of Montgomery's poems, the three confederates induce the Brahman to believe that a blind, mangy dog is an excellent sheep.

XIV.

THE SILENCE WAGER.

A.—THE FISH SUPPER.

IN a certain village dwelt a Brahman and his wife. One day, the Brāhmaṇī felt a very strong desire for *koī*¹ fish. So she said to her husband, "Do get me some *koī* fish to eat." "Very good, I will," he replied, and, going to the bazar, he bought three, which he fetched home and gave to his wife. She cut them up, cleaned them, and cooked them. When supper-time came, the Brahman said, "I will eat two of the three fish." "No, you shan't," replied his wife. "I'll eat two." "What?" cried her husband. "Am I not your lord and master, a person to be regarded with the greatest reverence? It is only fit and proper that I should eat the two." "Fudge!" retorted the Brāhmaṇī, "I'm only a servant, am I, that I should be content to get one?" "Who went to the bazar for them, I should like to know?" asked the Brahman. "And who cooked them, I should like to know?" rejoined his wife. "I am your husband, whom you are bound to treat with deference and respect," said he. "Moreover,

¹ Sk., *Kavayī*, the *Cojus Cobojus*, a cheap and common freshwater fish, said to travel by land from one place to another.

I took a deal of trouble to fetch these fish. So I must get the two.” “And I’m your wife,” she answered, “to whom you’re bound to be as kind as you can. Moreover, I took no end of trouble to cook these fish nicely. I must get the two.”

Neither would give way, and the quarrel between them grew hotter and hotter. At length, the Brāhmaṇī said, “Let us go to bed and see who speaks first. Whichever of us does, will have to take the one *koī* fish.” “That’s a very good idea,” replied the husband. Accordingly, they lay down, leaving their supper—rice, fish, and what not—untouched. They passed the night in absolute silence; neither the one nor the other would utter a syllable. Day dawned; the morning passed; it was getting on to noon: but they continued to lie perfectly still; neither of them would so much as get up and open the house-door.

The neighbours began to wonder what had happened. One after another came and called the Brahman and his wife, but in vain. Again and again, they shouted as loudly as they could, but nobody answered. At length, the people came to the conclusion that both of them must have died suddenly during the night. So they broke open the door, and, entering the house, began calling to them again. Still neither answered. They shook them and pulled them about; neither made the slightest sound. The neighbours, being now quite sure that they were dead, carried them away to the burning-ghat, and, leaving three of their number to perform the funeral rites, returned to their homes.¹

¹ In KSS, II, 209 f., a miserly Takka, for whom a milk-pudding

The three who remained, made up the pyre, placed the Brahman upon it, and applied the torch. They then lifted up the Brāhmaṇī to lay her beside her husband. Just at that moment, the flames reached the body of the Brahman. Unable to lie still or keep quiet any longer, he jumped up, crying, "Brām-hōṇī, I'll eat the one!" "Then I'll eat the other two," she promptly replied.³

Instantly, the three villagers, convinced that they had become *Bhūts*,⁴ and were speaking of devouring

is being prepared, goes to bed meanwhile, to avoid seeing any visitor who might stay to share it. When one does come, he pretends to be dead, and makes his wife mourn for him. The guest, who sees through the "plant," mischievously joins in the lamentation. The relatives come next, and the supposed corpse is carried off and burnt, as the miser will rather die than share his pudding.

³ Cf. LDB, 'The Adventures of Two Thieves,' pp. 169 ff. To avoid sharing some money with his companion, one of the two pretends to be dead, and the other takes away his body to burn it. But before he can do so, a band of dacoits turns up. The sight of a corpse being a good omen for them, they resolve to come back and burn it, if the night's enterprise is successful. They do this. When the thief feels the fire—as the story was told to me—he springs up, calling, "Brother, I'll take half!" The other, who is sitting concealed in a tree, jumps down, saying, "And I'll take half." The dacoits at once bolt, leaving all their spoil, as they think the thieves are two Vetālas who are about to devour them between them. Cf. KKT, p. 301, and RRT, pp. 47 ff. In the story of 'Foolish Sachūli,' he goes to the jungle with his five flour-cakes, saying, "I'll eat one, and I'll eat two," and so on, and the five fairies suppose that he means *them*—SIF, p. 33. 'Clever Grethel' tells the guest that her master intends to cut off his ears, whereupon he makes off; and she tells her master that he is bolting with the two roast fowls she herself has eaten, hearing which he pursues him with the knife he was sharpening, in his hand, calling "Just one! Just one!"—meaning one fowl, but understood by the guest to mean one ear—GHT, I, p. 309.

For variants of this story and the next, see CLP, II, pp. 15 ff.

⁴ See Appendix, Note 4.

the three of them between them, dropped the Brāhmaṇī and ran for their lives. The Brahman and his wife followed them, he repeating, "I will eat the one," and she saying, "I will eat the other two." When they got to their own house, they had their supper for breakfast, the husband taking the one *koī* fish, and the wife, the other two.

B.—THE GANJA-SMOKERS.⁵

Three well-seasoned ganja-smokers were travelling together to a certain place. They had started early in the morning and, towards midday, began to feel very tired and hungry, so, seeing a tank with some trees round it near the road, they agreed to rest there and have breakfast before going any farther. They sat down at the foot of one of the trees, and, having refreshed themselves with a smoke, went to a roadside shop and procured rice and what-not else they needed for a meal. Then they made a fire and cooked. Everything was ready, and they were just about to dish up their food, when it occurred to them that they had no plantain leaves⁶ from which to eat. One of them held out the cutter to another and said, "Brother, go and cut us some plantain leaves." He, in turn, passed on both cutter and request to the third, and he recommended the first to go,

⁵ Ganja is an intoxicant, prepared from the tops of the Indian hemp-plant. One effect of ganja-smoking is to make men unconscionable liars. "A ganja-smoker's tale" is Bengali for a "cock-and-bull" story. See 'Hōridasher Guptō Kōtha,' II, pp. 17 ff.

⁶ At home, a Bengali eats his rice from a large metallic *thala*. On a journey, or when several guests have to be provided for, plantain leaves are used as dishes.

himself. For a while, they went on, each telling the others to go and nobody actually going, till at length they resolved to hold their tongues and sit down—first man who spoke, to go and cut the leaves.

Hour after hour passed, but nobody broke the silence. The pariah dogs came and ate up the food. No one would utter a sound to scare them away. Night fell; still they sat on, perfectly mute. It was getting on towards midnight—and a very dark one, too—without any change in this state of affairs taking place, when the village watchman on his rounds came up to where they were sitting. “Who are you? And what’s your business here?” he asked. Getting no answer, he at once concluded they were thieves, and began to hammer them. Still there was no getting a word out of them, so he marched them off to the nearest Thana.

They were kept in the lock-up till morning, and then taken to the Deputy-Magistrate’s court. Presently, that officer arrived and took his seat, and the police-sergeant pushed one of the three worthies into the dock. The Magistrate began to question him, but he wouldn’t open his mouth. One of the constables gave him a good hammering, but it had no effect whatever. At last, the Magistrate said, “The rascal’s a lunatic. Turn him out of the court.” Forthwith, the sergeant took him by the scruff of the neck and gave him a shove which all but sent him sprawling. Involuntarily, he cried, “Get out, you rascal! Whom are you shoving?” The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when his two comrades, who were sitting awaiting their turns, rushed up to him, and, thrusting the cutter into

his hand, shouted triumphantly, "Cut, you rascal ! Cut the plantain leaves !" Everybody in the court was astonished, and the Magistrate asked them what on earth they meant by their queer behaviour. They now told him the whole story, with which he was greatly amused, and dismissed them, laughing heartily.

XV.

MASTER AND MAN.¹

THERE were once two brothers who were so very poor that the younger had to leave home and seek service. As he wandered about, hunting for a job, he came one day to a well-to-do Brahman's house. Having got an opportunity of speaking to the master, he said, "Thākur Mōshay,² do you want a servant?" "Yes," he replied, "and I've no objection to engaging you. But I make it a rule to take anybody as my servant only on certain conditions. If you agree to be bound by these, you may have the place." "What are the conditions, sir?" asked the man. "They are these," said the Brahman. "You must eat your rice off tamarind leaves;³ when you're up

¹ This story is a variant of 'The Cruel Merchant,' KKT, pp. 98 ff. Cf. HGA, I, pp. 118 ff., 'The Wager of the Three Brothers with the Beardless Man.' There the stake is flesh from off the backbone, to be lost by the person who flies into a rage. The two elder brothers successively lose the wager. The youngest wins, by wasting his master's sheep and cattle till he can stand it no longer.

² Thākur—Sk. *thakkura*—properly means an idol or deity. The image in a temple is commonly so designated, and Brahmans, being divinities on earth, are so addressed. "Mōshay," vulgar for "Mō-hāshoy"—Sk. *mahāśaya*, lit. = magnanimous, of noble disposition—is used as we use "Sir" or "Mr.," but implies greater deference.

³ Tamarind leaves are very minute. To speak of eating from them is an intentionally preposterous exaggeration. On 'plantain leaves,' commonly used for eating from, see No. XIV, Note 6.

and moving about, you must carry my boy ; and, when you sit down, you must prepare jute twine ; lastly, you must on no account throw up your place. If you do so, I shall have the right to cut off your nose. On the other hand, if I dismiss you, you shall have the right to cut off mine." " Very well, Thākur Mōshay," answered the man, " I agree to the conditions." The Brahman, then, engaged him as his servant on these terms.

A few weeks passed. What with getting next to nothing to eat and no end of work to do, the servant soon became as lean as a skeleton and as weak as a baby. Only think : hard work from early in the morning till late at night, and dinner and supper off a tamarind leaf ! Yet, for fear of losing his nose, he daren't as much as mention giving up his place. At last, however, he could stand it no longer. " If my nose must go, it must go ! " he said to himself, and, going to the Brahman, he told him he would stay in his service no longer. " Then I'll have your nose," answered his master. " Take it, then," he replied. The Brahman seized him, cut off his nose, and sent him about his business. The man went away back to his home, weeping bitterly, and said to his elder brother, " See what I've earned in service." Then he told him the whole story. " Just so," said the other. " Well, wait and see whether I don't bring you that Bāmon rascal's nose to replace your own."

Saying this, he set off for his brother's former master's house. Having got admittance, he asked him whether he needed a servant. " Yes," was the reply, " and you may have the place if you agree to

my conditions." He asked what these were, and the Brahman stated them precisely as he had done before. The man agreed to them without demur, and the Brahman at once engaged him.

Some days passed without anything special occurring. Then it chanced that the Brahman had to go somewhere on business. In the morning, before he started, he said to his servant, "Clean out" (or, make big and high, heap up) "the byre, while I'm away, and take that jute and twist it into rope" (or, cut it). "Very good, sir," was the reply. As soon as the Brahman's back was turned, the servant set to, and, turning the cow out of the byre, gathered all the cow-dung and piled it up in a great heap on the thatch. Then, taking the lengths of jute, he hacked them into as little pieces as possible, and stuffed them into a sack.

When his master came back in the evening, he called his man and asked, "Have you cleaned out" (or, piled up) "the byre?" "Yes, sir," said he, and, following his master to the spot, pointed complacently to his work. The Brahman saw to his amazement a great heap of cow-dung on the thatch. "Whatever is that?" said he. "Why," replied the servant, "you told me to pile up the byre. And I've piled it up as high as ever I could. What more would you have?" "You've played the very mischief with the byre!" cried the Brahman. "The thatch'll rot in no time. Did anybody ever see such a stupid rascal? Well, that can't be helped now. What about the jute? Have you twisted" (or cut) "it?" "Yes, sir," said the servant. "Where is it?" asked the master. "Inside that sack," was

the reply. "Inside a sack?" said the puzzled Brahman. "Let me see it." The servant tumbled out the contents of the sack. "You've ruined me, you good-for-nothing blackguard!" roared the Brahman, when he saw the tiny snippings. "All that jute, worth ever so much good money! And you've completely spoilt it." "Why, what's wrong now?" said the servant in an injured tone. "Didn't you tell me to cut it up?" And I've done so as thoroughly as I could. There's no pleasing you." The Brahman called him and his ancestors all the bad names he could lay his tongue to, for there was nothing else he could do.

Some days later, he happened to say to his servant, "Give the cow some water," (or, pour water on). "Yes, sir," he replied, and, taking the poor beast, he tied its feet together, then, having hauled it up a foot or two from the ground by means of a rope thrown over the branch of a tree, he proceeded to pour pailful after pailful of water over it. After a while, the Brahman came to the spot and found him busily employed in this way, and the cow more than half-dead. As quickly as he could, he let it down from the tree and cut the cord with which its feet were fastened. Then he asked his servant, "What in the world were you trying to do?" "Why, I was watering the cow as you told me to do," he replied. "She wouldn't stand still to be watered, so I had to hang her up to the tree." "You'll bring us all to perdition yet, you rascal!" said the Brahman.

⁴ Here and below, the servant deliberately misunderstands words of double meaning, taking them in the literal sense instead of the ordinary one, fixed by usage. Cf. CAS, pp. 6 ff.

“If I hadn’t come in the nick of time, you’d have committed cow-murder.”⁶ “If you please, sir, how else should I have done the job?” asked the man quite innocently. Again the Brahman had to be content with abusing his servant heartily, for he dared not dismiss him.

Another time, before going off for the day on some business or other, the Brahman told the servant to tidy up (or, to clear out) the garden. As soon as he had gone, the man went to the garden, cut down all the good trees and plants, and left them lying about. On his return in the evening, the master asked, “Well, have you tidied up” (or, cleared out) “the garden?” “Not quite altogether,” he replied. “But I did as much as I had time for.” “As much as you had time for?” said the Brahman. “What do you mean, you rascal? Let me see what you’ve done.” With these words, he hurried off to the garden, and found that every tree and plant that was of any use, had been cut down. “You scoundrel!” he roared, “you’ve completely spoilt the garden. Who told you to cut down all these?”

⁶ Bhagavati—Durgā—is specially incarnated in the cow, but, according to a common picture, practically every deity of any standing has his place in some portion or other of the sacred animal’s anatomy. It would be hard to say whether Brahman-murder or cow-murder is the more heinous crime according to popular ideas. Woman-murder comes next. A very unfortunate man will often express his wonder as to how many Brahmans, cows, and women he must have murdered in previous births to deserve all the ill-luck of the present one. By wandering about along with his wife after Nandini, the calf of the divine cow, Surabhi, solicitously ministering to her wants, and offering himself in her place to be devoured by the lion of Śiva, King Dilipa of the Solar race demonstrated his exemplary piety and delivered himself from a curse—Raghuvansā, I, 81 ff. See MWR, pp. 317 ff.

“Sir,” said the man humbly, “you told me to clear out the place. So I had first of all to cut the trees and plants down. All that remains to be done, is to carry away the rubbish. Then the garden’ll be completely cleared out.” “So it will,” retorted the Brahman grimly. “I see plain enough now why you took service with me. It was with the design of doing me all the harm you could. Well, carry away the wood you’ve cut, to the house.” Saying this, he walked off, fuming with anger.

The servant proceeded to carry in the wood. He had stowed away the most of it, when, coming back from the garden with a very heavy tree, he met the Brahman’s old mother. “Where shall I put this wood?” he asked her. “Oh, put it where you’ve put the rest,” was the reply. “There’s no more room there,” said he. “Then put it somewhere else,” she answered testily. “But every place is full,” said he. The old woman quite lost her temper at being bothered. “Then put it on my head!”⁶ she cried. Forthwith, he heaved the massive tree-trunk on to her head with such force that the old woman tumbled down dead on the spot. He then carried in the rest of the wood and piled it on the top of her.⁷

⁶ An expression of impatience.

⁷ With this incident, cf. SIF, p. 112. The Nabha Raja tells the strong woman, Ajit, in reply to her inquiry, to throw three elephants on to the roof of his palace, and is more than surprised when she actually does so, and they fall through it.

With the servant’s—of course, pretended—stupidity here and above, cf. KSS, II, pp. 76 f. A servant is told to keep some trunks from getting wetted with rain. He does so by taking out the fine clothes they contain and wrapping them round the trunks.

Presently, the Brahman came back and asked him, "Well, have you brought in all the wood?" "Yes, sir," said he. The master, wishing to speak to his mother about some household matter, began calling "Mother! mother!" Getting no answer, he said to the man, "Where's my mother gone?" "She's under that wood, sir," he replied, pointing to the heap. "What do you say?" asked the Brahman, greatly puzzled. "How in the world did she get under the wood?" "Sir," answered the servant, "I had filled up every place I could think of with wood, so I asked my venerable mother where I was to put what still remained. She told me to put it on her head, and I did so."

The Brahman rushed to the pile, and, pushing aside the wood, pulled his mother out. He saw that she was dead. Overpowered with grief, he said to the servant, "I've had enough of you. I don't want your services any longer. Make yourself scarce." "Very well," he replied; "I don't mind. But, according to our agreement, you must give me your nose." "Take it," said the Brahman. "Anything to get rid of you!" The man cut off his master's nose and went away home with it to his brother.⁸

⁸ It is contrary to all Folk-tale analogy that the elder brother should be the clever and fortunate one. Cf. variant in HGA, Note 1 above, and see MCF, pp. 365 ff.

XVI.

THE FOOLISH KING AND HIS FOOLISH MINISTER.

ONCE on a time, there was a Raja, called Hōbachondrō. His Chief Minister's name was Gōbachondrō. In his kingdom, day was regarded as night, and night, as day. Fried rice and candy-sugar sold for the same price.¹ In short, everything in that kingdom was extraordinary.

Now, in that country, there lived a Brahman, who had a servant, called Hōridash, who, through daily eating a large quantity of candy-sugar, had grown very fat. One day, a traveller arrived about noon in the bazar of the chief city of that kingdom, who was quite ignorant of the manners and customs prevailing there. He began to dig a fireplace in the bazar, in order to cook his food. Then he cooked his food and sat down to eat it. Presently, two policemen came along and saw that a fireplace had been dug. Forthwith, they said to the traveller, "You are a thief: you have cut a hole with a view to commit burglary."² "What?" said the astonished

¹ A common proverbial expression, denoting absolute want of discrimination.

² "Digging through"—Matt. vi. 19—is still the regular method of effecting a burglarious entry into houses with mud walls.

traveller, "isn't this the daytime? Who would ever think of cutting a hole to commit burglary in broad daylight? Besides, I haven't made a hole in the wall of a house, but only in the ground, in order to cook my food." "Don't you know," replied the policemen, "that, in our Raja's country, this is night-time?" Saying this, they bound him and dragged him away.

Next day—that is, during the night that followed—Raja Hōbachondrō was sitting with his Minister on his right hand and all his court assembled round him, when the policemen brought in the alleged thief and placed him before the Raja, charging him with burglary. Forthwith, the Raja, without giving the poor man a chance of saying a word in his own defence, ordered him to be impaled. Thereupon, the Minister, Gōbachondrō, said, "Mōharaj,³ a new stake has just been made. It is a very thick one. It would be well to try it first on a very fat man. After that, this thief may be impaled." "That's a very sensible suggestion," said the Raja, "and ought certainly to be carried out." Accordingly, he gave orders that the so-called thief should be kept in custody in the meantime, and the fattest man in the city sought out and brought before him.

Hundreds of officers at once rushed off in all directions, and, amongst all the fat people of the place, there was the greatest consternation. But none of them seemed to the officers to be fat enough for the purpose, till, at length, some, going to the candy-sugar bazar, caught sight of Hōridash, who, as has been said, had grown immensely stout through con-

³ Sk., *Mahārāja* = great king, Your Majesty.

stantly eating candy-sugar. Overjoyed at having found so fat a man, they at once seized him and dragged him off to court. The Raja, too, was greatly delighted when he saw Hōridash, and cried, "That's the very man we want! He and the stake will suit each other to perfection. Let him be impaled at once!"⁴ "Mōharaj," said Hōridash, "I haven't the slightest objection to being impaled. But the moment I saw that stake, somehow I felt sure that there's some mystery connected with it. Before I'm impaled, I should like to know where it came from and all about it. If you aren't inclined to heed what I say, there's a Brahman in the city who'll be able to give you full information on the point. Send for him and ask about it." "What Brahman?" inquired the Raja. Hōridash gave his master's name and address, and an officer was forthwith dispatched to fetch him.

The Brahman, learning from the officers all that had been said and done at court, set out immediately in obedience to the Raja's summons. But, as soon as he came in sight of the stake, though it was still

⁴ Cf. KSS, II, p. 61. A king saw a man stealing flesh from his kitchen and ordered an equal quantity to be cut from his body as a punishment. Then, moved to compassion by the poor wretch's suffering, he tried to compensate him by directing a much larger quantity of flesh to be given to him. Also, KSS, II, pp. 180 f. A washerman's donkey was eating the vegetables in a Brahman's garden. The Brahman chased it with a stick, and it fell into a pit and broke its hoof. So its master came and beat the Brāhmaṇī, with the result that she had a miscarriage. The case came before the Chief Magistrate, whose judgment was that the Brahman should carry the washerman's bundles till the donkey was again fit for work, and that the washerman should effect the restoration of the Brāhmaṇī to her former condition. See, also, STT, pp. 33 ff., and CLP, I, pp. 61 ff.

a long way off, he prostrated himself, and continued doing so, time after time, till he reached it, when he rose and began walking round and round it, reciting hymns all the while. The Raja, seeing the Brahman act in this strange way, was curious to know the reason of it. The moment the Brahman finished walking round the stake, he asked, "Why do you do that?" But the Brahman, taking no notice of the question, cried, "Oh, Mōharaj, I wish to be impaled on that stake. Do you graciously give orders that I be impaled at once upon it!" "What do you wish that for?" asked the Raja. "Mōharaj," answered he, "it is the result of all the holy deeds I have ever done that I have obtained so much as the mere sight of that stake! It was made in a most auspicious moment. All the three hundred and thirty millions⁵ of gods are present in it. Whoever is impaled upon it, will go at once to heaven, to abide there for ever.⁶ Formerly, that stake stood in the heaven of Viṣṇu. It is owing to your incomparable religious merit that it has descended into this world."

Hearing this, the Raja said, "Thākur, I'll be impaled on that stake myself." "Mōharaj," replied the Brahman, "the stake is yours. You can get yourself impaled on it whenever you please. But graciously

⁵ The number of Hindu gods and goddesses is stated to be thirty-three crores.

⁶ Cf. the artifice by which the 'Little Peasant' induces the Mayor and the rest of the villagers to jump into the river—GHT, I, p. 269. Similarly, the 'Master Thief' persuades the parson and his clerk to get into his sack, pretending he is Peter and will take them to heaven—GHT, II, pp. 330 f. Of the same kind is the trick by which Farrukhrúz gets his enemies sent off to Paradise via a pile of burning wood—CLER, pp. 183 f. See also, *ib.*, Note on pp. 500 ff., and No. XIX, Note 7.

let me have the privilege of being impaled to-day.” “No, no,” cried the Raja. “I, myself, must have the first turn!” “Very well, Mōharaj,” said the Brahman. “Be it as you please. Whatever you command, must be done. If you are impaled on that stake, you will not only go to heaven, but will be a Raja there. In that case, you will require a Chief Minister.” “Oh, I have a Minister here,” replied the Raja, pointing to Gōbachondrō. “If I am to be a Raja in heaven, as you say, then he must go with me to be my Minister there. Let him be impaled too.”

The Brahman then did *pūjā* to the stake, and, directing the Raja and his Minister to dress themselves in red clothes with garlands of red flowers on their heads, he caused them to be impaled, one after the other. They both died immediately. All the people were filled with admiration at the cleverness of the Brahman, and chose him to be their Raja on the spot. He reigned long and wisely, and, under him, the country enjoyed great prosperity.

XVII.

KĀNAI, THE GARDENER.

ONCE on a time, there was a gardener called Kānai. He was employed in the Raja's garden, which was a very beautiful one, full of all sorts of flowering plants and fruit-trees, and with many fine tanks, studded with lotuses. A lovelier sight was nowhere to be found. Kānai used to spend the whole day in the garden, going home at night.

One night, however, for some reason or other, instead of getting away to his own house, he had to remain in the garden. It was bright moonlight, and, till very late, he strolled about beside one of the tanks. All at once, he heard a tremendous noise. It seemed to come from the east. The trees and shrubs strained and groaned and crashed. Kānai, in great fear, hid himself behind a huge tree. Presently, he saw an enormous elephant descend from the sky,¹ and go roaming about through the garden. After a while, plucking up courage a little, he left his hiding-place, and went and sat down on the edge of the tank. As he sat there, he thought to

¹ Cf. KSS, II, p. 502—Lakshmī descends from heaven on an elephant with four tusks; *ib.*, II, p. 540—Indra gives King Merudhvaja two air-going elephants; *ib.*, I, p. 328—King Ratnādhpati obtains a white elephant, Śvetaraśmi, which is possessed of supernatural wisdom, and flies through the sky.

himself, "What in the world can this be? In all my life, I never saw such an immense elephant. But I remember hearing of a heavenly elephant, called Oirāböt,² which is said to be of vast size. No doubt, this is it. Anyhow, I must watch to-night, and see where this elephant goes." Having come to this resolution, he got up, and began to walk quietly after the elephant. It ate its fill of various fruits and roots that grew in the garden, and was just about to ascend to the sky again, when Kānai seized its tail, and managed to seat himself firmly.

Thus, when it went up into the sky, Kānai went up along with it. That celestial elephant, Oirāböt, was in the habit of coming every night into that garden in that same fashion, to eat the fruits and the roots, and then going away back to heaven again.

When they arrived in heaven, Kānai let go the elephant's tail. Oirāböt departed to Indra's palace, and Kānai began to walk about through heaven in all directions. Seeing and hearing what he had never seen or heard before, and, indeed, had never expected to see or hear at any time, he was unspeakably delighted. He was especially astonished at the marvellously low prices of things. And yet everything

² Sk., *Airāvata*, the elephant of Indra. Indra, in the later Hindu mythology, has fallen to the second rank, and much that is discreditable and ludicrous—*e.g.*, his intrigue with Ahalyā, the wife of the sage Gautama, and its result—is related of him. This degradation of Indra is doubtless due to the fact that, in the Veda, while many passages express grand and lofty ideas of him, in others he is described as a big-bellied, sensual Soma-swiller. Brunnhofer accounts for the latter by the hypothesis that Mongolian tribes were absorbed by the Sanskrit-speaking, full-blood Aryans, and to them the representation of Indra "als türkischer Schlemmer" is due—'Arische Urzeit,' pp. 289 ff.

was of such huge size that the sight filled him with amazement.³ He first of all ate his fill of celestial sweetmeats and various other dainties, and then he bought some *pan*-leaf, and some betel-nut. Both the *pan* and the betel-nut were enormously big, like everything else in heaven; for, there, everything is on a vast scale. This done, he came and sat down beside the elephant.

Next night, Oirābōt went down to the garden as usual, but with Kānai hanging on to his tail. As soon as they got there, Kānai let go the tail, and hurried straight home. His wife was looking out for him along the road. He had never before failed to come home every evening, but now, for two whole days, she had seen nothing of him. Of course, she had become very anxious about her husband. As soon as she saw him coming, she ran to meet him, and cried, "Where have you been? Where have you been?" Kānai, without answering a word, brought out the big *pan*-leaf and betel-nut. At the sight of them, his wife fairly danced with joy. "Where did you get these? Where did you get these?" she cried. Kānai then told his wife all his adventures. When he had done, she said, "I'll go too." "Very well," answered her husband, "but see you don't

³ With the size of the celestial commodities, cf. that of the fleas of Java, which were said to be big enough to steal potatoes, and of the Fenian drinking-cans, which were too big for a man to lift—SIF, pp. 274 ff., Note XVIII, 5. The account of the heaven of Indra given here, reminds one of the land of Cockaigne with its rivers of wine, houses built of dainties and roofed with cake-shingles, showers of buttered larks, roast geese walking about and offering themselves to be eaten, etc., etc. In RRT, p. 296, an old man finds in heaven and carries off a mill which grinds pies and pancakes. Cf. the variants of the story on that and the next page.

tell anybody else about this.” “Oh, no,” said she, “I’ll not say a word about it.” However, when she went to the ghat a little while after to fetch water, she met there her own particular friend, and told her the whole story. She, in turn, told it as a great secret to her particular friend, and so on. Then the wives went home and told their husbands, and, in this way, everybody in the village very soon knew all about it. They all came flocking to Kānai the gardener, and said, “Brother, you must take us to heaven, too ! Brother, you must take us to heaven, too !” What could the poor man do ? There was nothing for it but to agree to what they asked.

That night, accordingly, after taking supper, they all came together to Kānai’s house. He led them away to the garden, and, when they found the elephant, Oirābōt, he said, “First of all, I shall take hold of the tail, then my wife will take hold of me. Next, her particular friend will take hold of my wife, and her husband, again, will take hold of my wife’s friend, and so on. In this way, we shall make the journey.” They all approved of the plan. So, when the elephant had done feeding, and was on the point of departing, Kānai quickly got behind him, and seized his tail. And then, as agreed, they all laid hold of one another in turn. Up went the elephant, higher and higher. He had mounted a long, long way, when the particular friend of Kānai’s wife said to her, “How big was the betel-nut that your husband brought home, and how big are the sweetmeats up there ?” His wife repeated the question to Kānai, who answered, “Wait a bit, and I’ll tell you.” She answered, “No, no. That won’t do. My friend will be angry, if I don’t

give her an answer. Tell us at once." Being thus dunned, Kānai lost patience and said, "So big." As he spoke, he let go the elephant's tail to stretch out his arms by way of indicating the size, and, in a moment, they were all tumbling head over heels through the air.⁴

⁴ For parallels to this tale, see Appendix, Note 5.

["At midnight, don't let your hand slip," the moral of the above story, is a current saying among Bengalis, a sort of exhortation to perseverance and, especially, to undivided attention to the matter in hand. A good many similar tales were related to me, their aim being to show that it doesn't pay to try to sit on two stools at once, nor, if a man has two strings to his bow, to pull both at the same time.]

XVIII.

THE WILY JACKAL.¹

ONCE on a time, in a certain forest, a lion, a tiger, a mungoose, a mouse, and a jackal were living together on very friendly terms. One day, the lion saw an elephant feeding. Thereupon, he said to himself, "We must contrive to get that elephant to eat," and, calling the jackal, he told him he must manage somehow to have the elephant killed. "As Your Majesty commands," replied the jackal, and he went off in search of the mouse. When he found him, he said, "Brother, you've got to kill that elephant." "I kill the elephant!" answered the mouse. "The elephant's a huge brute. How's a tiny creature like me to kill him?" "You can manage it

¹ This story is simply a variant of the tenth in Book IV of the 'Panchatantra.' Benfey, 'Pantschatantra,' I, p. 472, II, pp. 316 ff. Weber considers that the jackal is really not a very cunning animal, and that, therefore, stories in which it figures as such, must be originally borrowed by the Indians from the West, where the fox quite appropriately appears in Folk-tales as the embodiment of craft. See Benfey, I, pp. 102 f. Ralston—p. 22, Note—points out, on the other hand, that, in such Western tales as the Russian 'Fox-Wailer,' the plot turns on the animal's howling powers, and, not the fox, but the jackal is a great howler. Such tales must, therefore, originally have been narrated of the jackal. Bengalis, certainly, now-a-days regard the jackal as cunning; it is constantly spoken of as "*dhūrttō*."

this way," said the jackal. "Burrow a tunnel under the ground from where you are standing to the place where the elephant is feeding. When he sets his foot on the spot where the ground is hollowed out below, it'll give way. Then do you gnaw through the tendon of his foot with your teeth, and he'll fall down and soon die." The mouse burrowed a tunnel as the jackal bade him, and, when the ground gave way under the elephant's foot, and it sank down into the hole, he bit through the tendon of the heel, and the elephant came down bodily with a great crash, and, in no long time, died.

The jackal now went back to the lion and said, "Master, your orders have been carried out. The elephant's dead." The lion was highly delighted at the news, and thought to himself, what a fine feast all five of them would have. The jackal, for his part, thought to himself, "I've been clever enough to compass the death of the elephant. Now, I must show myself clever enough to get the whole of him for myself to eat." So he said to the lion, "Master, this is a most auspicious day. First bathe and perform the stated rites for the benefit of your deceased father and grandfather,² and then come and regale yourself with the flesh of the elephant." The lion quite approved of this suggestion, and went off, presently followed by the other three friends, to a neighbouring tank to bathe, while the jackal remained on guard beside the carcass of the elephant.

² The *Nitya* or regular *Śrāddha*, consisting of libations of water, made when the daily prayers are repeated. MWR, p. 305. See No. VII, Note 7. According to popular belief, even the Bhūts would fain celebrate *Śrāddha*. One of the stories narrated to me was called 'The Bhūt's Father's *Śrāddha*.'

The lion returned the first from his bath. When he came up, the jackal said to him, "Master, I've something to say to you. Will it be safe for me to speak quite frankly?" "By all means, speak frankly," was the reply. "Well, Master," said the jackal, "the mouse has been saying to me, 'The lion is the king of all the animals. He's in the habit of killing for himself and us, too. Will he actually condescend to eat an animal that we have killed?'" When he heard this, the lion said, "That's quite true. I eat what I've killed, myself. It's altogether beneath my dignity to eat an animal that the mouse has killed." So saying, he walked off, feeling more dignified than pleased. He had just gone, when the tiger turned up. The jackal said to him, "For some reason or other, the lion's in a great rage at you. He gave me orders to let him know as soon as you appeared. I thought it only friendly to tell you about this. You will, of course, do as you think fit." The tiger thought to himself, "What's the use of quarrelling with the lion? He's a very powerful animal. It's wiser to forego the chance of a feed of elephant-flesh than to risk a fight with him. I'll just take myself off for a while." The mongoose came next. "What have you done to anger the tiger?" the jackal asked him forthwith. "I'm to inform him the moment you put in an appearance. And it is only fair to tell you that he looked as if he meant business, when he gave me the order. You'd better consider well what you ought to do in the circumstances." "It's out of the question for me to think of quarrelling with the tiger," replied the mongoose. "He's a thousand times as big and strong

as I am. The only course for me is to clear out." Which he did. Last of all, the mouse appeared. As soon as he saw him, the jackal said, "How have you fallen out with the mongoose? I'm to tell him the moment I see you. He seems to have some score to pay off. Anyway, I've told you. You know, yourself, what you had better do." "I mustn't quarrel with him, whatever I do," answered the mouse. "Like enough he would prefer me to elephant. I had better be going." And he, too, went off. Much elated by the success of his plan, the jackal now proceeded to discuss the elephant.³

³ The jackal incurs no penalty for his greed in this story, such as befalls him in 'Panchatantra,' Bk. II, Story 3. See Benfey, 'Pantschatantra,' I, pp. 319 f., II, pp. 174 f.

XIX.

THE LUCKY RASCAL.

IN a certain village lived a Brahman who had a wife and two or three children. He was very poor, and had to support himself and his family by incessant hard work. When the eldest boy was six or seven years old, he was sent to the village school. But he made no attempt to learn anything. Most days, he played the truant, and rambled about, working all sorts of mischief. As he got bigger, his father did everything in his power to make him attend school regularly and learn his lessons properly. But it was of no use. Seeing this, his father said, "I'll set him to learn astrology." The youth, for a while, was interested by the new study, and so acquired some proficiency in it. But, once the novelty wore off, he went back to his old ways. At this, his father lost patience. "You're a thorough-paced rascal," said he to the lad. "I'll feed you no longer. Here am I, an old man, wearing myself to skin and bone that I may be able to support you and your brothers, whilst you—from morning to night, you do nothing but mischief. I'll toil no longer for the likes of you. Take yourself off. I don't care where you go. You'll get nothing here any longer." With these words,

he chased him out of the house. The lad went off at once, without offering any objection.

He had never in his life before been outside of his native village, and knew nothing about the way to this place or that. So he walked on and on, without heeding much in what direction he went. By mid-day, he had travelled a considerable distance, and began to feel very tired as well as hungry and thirsty. So he made up his mind to seek hospitality at the first house he came to. Before long, he arrived at one, and halted before the door. The master of the house, seeing a Brahman present himself as a guest about midday, received him very kindly and respectfully. He gave him a seat, brought him water to wash his feet, filled and lighted the hookah for him, then went away to see about getting the various things he needed for breakfast.¹ The Brahman lad, after washing his feet and enjoying a smoke, got up and went to bathe. Presently, he returned, and, when he had finished his morning prayers,² he began to sing a song, as he sat waiting for his breakfast. He was a rather good singer. An old woman, who belonged to the house, hearing him, came out and asked, "What are you singing, my dear?" "I'm chanting a bit of the Rámáyṇ," was the reply. "Oh," said she, "I've a copy of the *Lonka-Kaṇḍō*. You might kindly chant a bit of it to me." "Certainly," answered the Brahman. "But which would you prefer—to hear the *Lonka-Kaṇḍō*,³ or to see it?"

¹ The young Brahman could not, of course, eat the cooked food of a man of lower caste. So his host would give him rice, etc., to prepare for himself.

² See MWR, pp. 393 and 401 ff.

³ Sk. *Kāṇḍa* means chapter or section. *Laṅkā-Kāṇḍa* or *Yuddha-*

“To see it, of course,” said the old woman. “But is a poor creature like me likely to have had such a destiny allotted to her that she should actually see with her eyes the *Lonka-Kaṇḍō*.” “Oh, you’ve only to say the word,” was the reply, “and I’ll show you it.” “Then pray do so,” said she. “What a vast amount of merit I must have acquired in my previous births, to have been so lucky as to meet with you to-day, and so get an opportunity of seeing the *Lonka-Kaṇḍō*! But what things do you need for the purpose?” “Are there any monkeys in this village?” he asked. “In the village?” was the reply. “Why, we keep a tame one in the house.” And she hurried away to fetch it.

The Brahman, first of all, cooked breakfast for himself, and took a hearty meal. Then, laying hold of the monkey, he wrapped some rags firmly round its tail and soaked them thoroughly with oil. This done, he set fire to them. As soon as it felt the burning oil, the monkey, maddened with the pain, began to jump about all over the place. Away it went, bounding from one cottage-roof to another. The dry thatch burned like tinder; soon the whole village was in a blaze, and, in a very short time, nothing was left standing but the blackened earthen walls. The villagers, of course, now began to inquire

Kāṇḍa is the sixth Bk. of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which gives an account of Rāmā’s war with Rāvaṇa, the *Rākshasa* or demon King of Ceylon. But, in Bengali, *Kāṇḍa* (pronounced *Kāṇḍō*) is almost synonymous with our “great to-do” or “sensation.” Thus, *Lonka-Kaṇḍō* means also “the great affair” of L., viz., the burning of the capital by the monkey-god, Hanumān, Rāma’s ally. The *Rākshasas*, in the course of a fight, greased his tail and set fire to it—to their own undoing.

how the fire had originated, and, hearing the old woman's story, at once seized the Brahman. "What have *I* done?" he asked indignantly. "What have *you* done?" they retorted. "What worse could anybody do than burn down the whole village?" "And is it my fault that your village has been burned down?" rejoined he. "If people had not asked me to let them see the *Lonka-Kaṇḍō*, this would never have happened." "There's no use talking," said they. "You've got to go to the Raja's court." "Come along, then," said he. "I'm sure I've no objection." So, keeping firm hold of him, they led him away.

They had a long road to go, and the day got hotter and hotter. As they trudged along, the Brahman picked up a cowrie that was lying on the road, and when, presently, they came to a tank, he said to his captors, "Let me go for a minute or two. I should like to bathe in this tank." "Very well," they replied, and released him. An old woman was sitting there, selling oil. The Brahman went up to her, and asked for a cowrie's worth of oil. "Go and die, Bāmon," said she. "Who ever heard of a cowrie's worth of oil?" "Please, give me just a little," he answered. "This is all the money I have." Seeing he was a Brahman, she gave him a little. While doing so, she spilt a few drops. The Brahman said, "Though you've given me some, you've spilt the most of it." "So much the better," she replied.

⁴ One hundred and sixty cowrie shells (*Cypræa Moneta*) used to equal in value one pice, which, when the rupee was at par, was worth three-quarters of a halfpenny. With this part of the tale, cf. No. XII. and CLP, I, pp. 18 f.

“ When oil gets spilt, people’s lifetime is lengthened.”⁵
“ Oh, my lifetime will be lengthened, will it ? ” he rejoined, and, forthwith, taking his stick, he struck the old woman’s three oil-pots, one after another, and smashed every one of them, thus destroying her whole stock-in-trade, before anybody had time to interfere. In great anger and distress, the old woman cried, “ Ah, go and die, you villain ! What do you mean by breaking my oil-pots ? ” “ Why do you abuse me ? ” he asked, with an injured air. “ And when I’ve done you so great a benefit, too.” “ Go and die, Bāmon,” she cried again. “ You’ve broken all my oil-pots, and yet you’ve the impudence to say you’ve done me a benefit.” “ And why shouldn’t I say so ? ” was the reply. “ If my lifetime was lengthened, when you spilt a few drops of oil—as you, yourself, said—just think how much yours must have been lengthened by my spilling three big pot-fuls. Moreover, as you’re already very, very old, the benefit to you of getting your lifetime lengthened is all the greater.” “ Oh, shut up,” said the old woman. “ You’ve got to go before the Raja and answer for this. That’s what you’ve got to do.” “ Very good ; come along,” he replied.

As the company, now increased by the addition of the old oil-woman, proceeded on its way, the Brahman noticed two cowries lying in the road, which he picked up. Presently, he said to his guards, “ Let me go for a minute. I should like to buy some betel.” As before, they agreed, and released him. Close by,

⁵ Cf. such superstitions as the Western notion about the inauspiciousness of spilling salt,

there was sitting a Hindustani betel-seller.⁶ The Brahman, going up to him, held out his two cowries and said, "Brother, give me two cowries' worth of fragrant, savoury betel." At this, the Hindustani flew into a rage and said, "A precious cheek, you have! To come expecting to get betel to eat for two cowries! Get away! When you see somebody whose lips are red with eating betel, rub your mouth on that person's. That'll be a good two cowries' worth. Clear out!" The Brahman, looking about, saw the Hindustani's wife sitting in the shop. Her lips were quite scarlet with eating betel. He went straight up to her, and was on the point of rubbing his lips upon hers. Her husband, fairly infuriated, cried, "You impudent rascal, would you dare?" "Haven't you just this moment told me to do so?" said the Brahman. "I'm only doing what you advised." "You'll have to go to court for this, my fine fellow," replied the betel-seller. "Come along." "Very good," said the Brahman. "Come along."

The procession started again—the people from the burnt village, the old oil-woman, and the betel-seller all keeping a grip of the Brahman—and, presently, they arrived at the court. It was just about to rise; the Raja, however, sat down again, and, after hearing the statements of the several complainants in order, summarily condemned the Brahman to be impaled. But, as it was already evening, the sentence could not be executed that day. The Raja, accordingly, ordered him to be tied up to the stake till next

⁶ In Bengal—especially in the cities—betel-sellers are usually up-country people.

morning, and the officers of the court at once marched him off to the place of execution, and carried out their master's order.

Left there to his own reflections, the Brahman began to reproach himself for his mad cantrips. "It's all up with me now," he said to himself. "After my father had turned me out, I was lucky enough to get a hospitable reception from the villager. Why did I bring about that *Lonka-Kaṇḍō*, and why did I spill the oil, and why did I pick a quarrel with that Hindustani rascal? Now, I'm likely to pay for my larks with my life. Well, let me see what Fate has in store for me." In the midst of his meditations, he suddenly noticed a hunchback passing along the road. Forthwith, he began to shout, "Brother hunchback! Brother hunchback! Come this way for a minute." Hearing him calling, the hunchback turned and came up to the stake. The Brahman said to him, "Brother hunchback, kindly feel my back and tell me whether you find any hump on it or not." The hunchback passed his hand over the Brahman's back, and said, "No, there's no hump that I can feel." "Feel again, brother hunchback," said the Brahman. The hunchback carefully passed his hand again and again, up and down and across the Brahman's back, and then said, "No, brother, there's not the slightest trace of a hump." The Brahman heaved a great sigh of relief. "Ah, brother," he said. "What a deliverance! I had a huge hump on my back, but, through my being bound to this stake, it has suddenly quite disappeared.⁷ What wonderful virtue this stake must possess! I never

⁷ Cf. the artifice by means of which the Brahman rescues Hōridash

in my life saw or heard of the like." "Do you really mean to say so?" answered the hunchback. "If that's the case, brother, then kindly tie me up to the stake. This hump's the plague of my life. I never feel at ease for even a moment, with it. Constantly having to carry it about is wearing my life away. And none of my friends can bear to look at me. If being tied up to this stake rids one of a hump, then do tie me up, brother." "How can I?" said the Brahman. "Don't you see my hands and feet are bound fast? But, if you can manage to loose me, then I'll tie you up, and you'll see how quickly your hump will disappear." It did not take the hunchback long to untie the Brahman, and the latter, as soon as he was free, made the hunchback fast in his place, and ran off with all the speed he could.

and gulls King Hōbachondrō and his Minister into getting themselves impaled—No. XVI, p. 141, and Note 6. See, also, the story of Rūpinikā, KSS, I, pp. 80 ff, with Note on p. 81. Lohajangha fools his mother-in-law by pretending he will take her to heaven. Much better analogues are to be found in GHT; *e.g.*, the dodge by which the 'Little Peasant' gets the shepherd to take his place in the barrel and be rolled into the water—I, pp. 268 f.—and that by which the man in the robber's sack, in 'The Turnip,' induces the student to take his place, pretending that it is a sack of wisdom, inside which everything can be learned in a very short time—II, pp. 214 f. See also the story of 'Little Fairly'—'Lover's Legends and Tales of Ireland,' pp. 263 ff. He induces a farmer to release him and take his place in the sack, paying him a thousand guineas for the privilege, by averring that the person inside it is sure to go to heaven. Cf. CAS, pp. 31 f. A precisely similar incident to that in our story is found in 'The Beautiful One and the Drakos.' The hero, who is another 'Lucky Rascal,' when tied up to a tree in the forest and abandoned to starve by his elder brother, gets a hunchbacked shepherd to take his place, by assuring him that being bound to the tree had rid him of his hump, and then goes off with the gull's sheep—HGA, I, pp. 75 f. See also CLP, II, pp. 229 ff. and 490, and 'Sagas from the Far East,' p. 103.

Presently, he came to a house where a garland-weaver⁸ lived. There he went in and said to the woman, "Garland-weaver, you are my aunt. I'll make you a grand lady. But you must do me one service. Let nobody find out that I'm here." "Very good," replied the garland-weaver, and she gladly allowed him to take up his abode in her house.

Meanwhile, as soon as morning broke, the officers of the court proceeded to the place of execution to impale the Brahman. What was their astonishment to find the criminal gone, and a hunchback tied up in his place! Away they went to the Raja, and reported the extraordinary occurrence. "What?" said the Raja. "You say that the criminal has escaped?" "Yes, Your Majesty," was the reply. "And there's a hunchback tied up in his place." The Raja was dumbfounded. Without a moment's delay, he went straight to the spot, and asked the hunchback, "What's the meaning of this?" "Your Majesty, I'm sure I can't tell," was the reply. "Yesterday evening, I was walking along this road. There was a man tied to this stake here. He called to me, and, when I went up to him, he said to me, 'Brother, look and tell me whether there's any hump on my back?' I said, 'No, there isn't.' Hearing that he said, 'Oh, brother, this is a most extraordinary stake. The consequence of my being tied up to it, is that the hump I had on my back, has disappeared.' Your

⁸ Or, rather, flower-seller woman, a personage whom we find repeatedly figuring in Folk-tales. See LDB, p. 115; FOD, pp. 11, 35, 78, 147, and 159; SIF, p. 277, latter part of Note 2; No. XXVI, Note 8. The *Māli's* wife is usually very faithful to her guest. The last-cited case is the only one I remember in which she plays him false.

Majesty, this hump of mine is an insufferable affliction to me. So, hearing his wonderful story, I said to the fellow, 'If that's the case, kindly tie me up.' 'I will, if you loose me,' he replied. So I untied him, and he made me fast to the stake, and then ran off, where, I can't tell. This is all I know." "Bah!" said the Raja. "That fellow's no ordinary scoundrel"; and he charged the Kotwal to have him arrested without delay. The Kotwal said boastfully, "Where can he go? I'll lay him by the heels this very day."

The garland-weaver was in the habit of supplying flowers to the royal household. She had arranged with the Brahman to let him know all that went on in the palace and other public places. She was among the crowd beside the stake, and now went straight home and told the Brahman about the Raja's order to the Kotwal and the Kotwal's boast. The Brahman said to himself, "Oh, the rascal will catch me this very day, will he? That remains to be seen."⁹ Questioning the garland-weaver about the Kotwal and his family, he learned that he had a son-in-law, who from time to time came to his house to visit his wife. He then procured some very fine clothes, and, late at night, going to the Kotwal's house, he sent in word by a maid-servant that the son-in-law had arrived. This news produced no end of excitement in the family.¹⁰ But, when the maid-

⁹ From this point, the tale belongs for the most part to the 'Master-Thief' cycle. Cf. LDB, pp. 160 ff.; KKT, pp. 104 ff., 297 ff., 338 ff., 139 ff.; STT, pp. 37 ff.; GHT, II, pp. 166 ff., 320 ff.; Liebrecht, 'Zur Volkskunde,' pp. 33 f.; 'Sagas from the Far East,' pp. 131 f.; CLP, II, pp. 115 ff.; KRS, I, pp. 257 ff.

¹⁰ With the fooling of the Kotwal, cf., specially, the tricks played on the three police-officers—KKT, pp. 115 ff.

servant returned to fetch him in, the sham son-in-law said, "Don't trouble to get supper for me. Just put a light in the bedroom. I shall come back immediately and go straight to bed." Saying this, he went away, then, returning after a little, made his way to the bedroom, without giving any of the family an opportunity of seeing him. Arrived there, he at once put out the light and lay down beside the Kotwal's daughter. He had hardly done so, when he began to complain that her gold ornaments scratched him, and told her to take them off, which she did, laying them beside her. The Brahman waited patiently till she was sound asleep, then, picking up her ornaments, he made his way out of the house, without disturbing any of the inmates.¹¹ Once in the street, he ran his fastest straight to the garland-weaver's house, and, giving her the ornaments, said, "The Kotwal is out hunting for me, but nobody has been quick enough to observe that a theft has been committed in his own house."

In the morning, the Kotwal came home, and was fairly astounded when he learned from his family all that had happened there during the past night. Going at once to the Raja, he said, "Your Majesty, just hear what a mischief that rascal has done me," and gave him the history of the night. The Raja listened in utter amazement, and, when the Kotwal finished, he said, "By hook or by crook, that fellow must be got a hold of. Let everything else go, until

¹¹ Cf. the theft from the palace in No. XX, the theft of the Queen's ornaments, LDB, pp. 175 ff., and GHT, II, p. 329—the 'Master Thief,' during the night, decoys the Count away, and, personating him, gets his wife's ring from her.

you have him under lock and key." The Kotwal, summoning his brothers to help him, and sending his police in all directions, devoted himself so zealously to the task that he did not even go home for breakfast. The Brahman, sitting in his safe retreat, learned all this from the garland-weaver. He now got himself up like a devotee of Śiva,¹² with a rosary of *Rudrāksha*¹³ berries round his neck, ashes rubbed all over his body,¹⁴ a wig of thick matted locks,¹⁵ the three horizontal finger-lines marked with sandalwood on his forehead,¹⁶ tongs and trident¹⁷ in his hands—altogether, a gruesome figure. Uttering the sound *bōm-bōm*¹⁸ as he walked along, he made his way to the Kotwal's house, where only the women were at home, all the men being away searching for the thief. Women always treat devotees of any kind with great reverence, get them to tell their fortunes, procure infallible remedies from them, if any of the family happen to be ill, and so forth. Thus, thanks to his devotee's disguise, the Kotwal's womenkind, as a matter of course, gave the Brahman

¹² On Siva, see MWR, pp. 75 ff.

¹³ *Elæocarpus Ganitrus*.

¹⁴ Sk., *bhasma-dhāraṇa*. See MWR, pp. 399 f.

¹⁵ Worn by all ascetics—i.e., not, as in this case, a wig, but their own hair, which is never combed or cleaned, though often coiled up fantastically.

¹⁶ Sk., *tripuṇḍraka*. See MWR, p. 400.

¹⁷ The *triśūla* is the specially characteristic weapon of Śiva. With the account of the whole get-up, cf. LDB, p. 179. It—tiger-skin included—imitates that of Śiva, himself, the arch-ascetic.

¹⁸ Vulgar pronunciation of the Sk. *om*—"the most sacred of all Hindu utterances, made up of the three letters A, U, M, and symbolical of the threefold manifestation of the one Supreme Being in the gods, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and (Mahādeva =) Śiva." See MWR, pp. 402 f.

a most cordial and respectful welcome, begging him to come in and sit down, as soon as they caught sight of him. He spread out his tiger-skin, and took his seat upon it with great dignity. One woman after another came dropping in, till soon he had quite a crowd about him. One consulted him about one thing, another about something else, and the devotee greatly impressed them all by his oracular answers. Among them were the wives of the Kotwal and one of his brothers. The state of their hair was a standing vexation to the two ladies¹⁹—it was so thin and short, and getting grey. So, availing themselves of the present opportunity, they asked the devotee whether he couldn't tell them of a good hair-restorer. "Of course I can," said he. "What do I not know? Making hair grow is a mere trifle. You see that old muddy tank there, near your house? Well, all you've got to do is to have your heads shaved, and then take a dip over the head in that tank, and you'll get magnificent crops of hair." "We'll do so at once," they joyfully answered. "What sort of hair will it be, Thākur?" "Oh, finer than anything you can imagine," said he. "Ever so long—reaching down to your ankles—and jet-black." Hearing this, they went off at once, and were back in no time with their heads shaved smooth. The devotee performed a brief *pūjā*; then, accompanying them to the side of the tank, he pronounced a charm, and said, "Now plunge in. And, remember, the longer you keep your heads under water, the

¹⁹ On the preciousness of her hair to a Hindu woman, see MWR, pp. 375 f. With the incident, cf. the story of 'The Bald Wife,' LDB, pp. 280 ff. But nothing supernatural occurs in our tale.

better." The two women at once went down into the tank and ducked their heads under the water. The moment they did so, the sham devotee sneaked away, and made for the garland-weaver's house, as fast as ever he could. The two women, having kept their heads under water as long as was possible, at length stood up again, and, to their great dismay, found their heads covered, not with hair, but with leeches. Loudly complaining and bewailing themselves, they went back to the house, where they set to work to detach the leeches—a most painful operation, which made the blood run down from their heads to their very feet.

A little after nightfall, the Kotwal came home, having had his labour for his pains that day, and was met by the news of the outrage wrought upon his wife and sister-in-law. "That villain's spite seems all directed against me,"²⁰ said he to himself, and, feeling utterly nonplussed, he wended his way back to the Raja, and told him about his new misfortune. The Raja said, "It's plain that catching the fellow is too stiff a job for you. We must call in the aid of an astrologer."²¹ The most skilful in

²⁰ Cf. the "dead set" made by the Minister's son against the astrologer in No. XX.

²¹ In many Hindu tales, the astrologer replaces the "Keen-eye" of stories which, as regards this particular point, are more primitive. *E.g.*, Lynceus is said to have been able to look all over the Peloponnesus from the summit of Taygetus, and thus to have seen the Dioseuri within the hollow oak-tree. Lang, 'Homer and the Epic,' p. 333. Cf. CLP, I, pp. 281 ff. Actual X phenomena were, doubtless, the original source of the belief that certain persons were possessed of such powers. See MCF, pp. 208 ff., and the very interesting discussion of this whole subject in Lang's 'The Making of Religion.' See also, No. XX, Note 10.

the city was sent for, and, in a very short time, he appeared. The Raja requested him to let them know as quickly as possible where the formidable rascal then was. The astrologer made a reckoning, and said, "Your Majesty, he is in your garland-weaver's house, and, at this moment, is sitting playing cards." "How many persons are playing together?" asked the Raja. "Four," was the reply. "Then how's one to know which is he?" said the Raja rather testily. "Tell us exactly where he is sitting." The astrologer answered, "He's the one sitting in such-and-such a place." Hearing this, the Raja at once dispatched his officers, telling them to seize the man sitting in that particular spot in the garland-weaver's house.

But, as we have seen, the Brahman, also, knew something about astrology. He, too, had been making a reckoning at this very time, and so come to know that the Raja, in accordance with his astrologer's advice, had sent to arrest him. Forthwith, he got another of the card-players to exchange seats with him. Presently, the officers turned up, and marched off the man they found sitting in the place indicated by the astrologer. The moment he saw him, the Raja recognized him as the son of one of the most highly-respected people in the town, and, knowing for certain that his being guilty of such devilry was out of the question, began to relieve his feelings by abusing the astrologer. "Your Majesty," humbly answered the latter, "I'll make another reckoning." "Very well," said the Raja, "and let's have no more of your humbug." Having made his reckoning, the astrologer said, "Your Majesty, I can say positively, he's sitting in such-and-such a spot."

The officers made a bolt for the garland-weaver's house, and seized the man sitting in the place described. But the Brahman had again been beforehand with them, and changed his seat a second time. The man they brought was very well known to the Raja—was, indeed, a relative of his own. The Raja was furious. Turning to the unlucky astrologer, he said, "You know as much about divination as any bullock." The astrologer begged to be allowed to try just once again, and the Raja consented, but with a very bad grace. The Brahman, however, again succeeded in baffling his enemies as completely as on the two previous occasions. For this time, too, the man the officers fetched, turned out to be an intimate acquaintance of the Raja's. His Majesty, in great disgust, sent the astrologer packing, and then, in a very despondent mood, sat down to consider the situation.

What on earth was he to do? How was that mischievous scoundrel to be caught and punished? After long reflection, he said to himself, "There's nothing for it but to make an effort to get a hold of him, myself."²² Pretty well everybody else in the kingdom has tried his hand at the job, and nobody has been able to make anything of it. Let me see what luck I have, myself." Having come to this resolution, when night fell, he armed himself, mounted his horse, and rode forth on his difficult quest.

Meanwhile the Brahman, ascertaining by divination what was afoot, betook himself to an extensive

²² So, when everybody else has failed to catch the thief who is robbing all the citizens, King Viraketu of Ayodhyá, himself, undertakes the task: KSS, II, pp. 298 ff.—the 14th tale of the *Vetāla*.

plain outside the town. There he roughly fenced in a space and made two or three fire-pits in it,²³ and set up a few Śiva-*lingas*,²⁴ piling up *bel*²⁵ leaves before them. Then, getting himself up as a most fearsome-looking devotee, he sat down in the middle of the fire-pits, and began to mutter prayers in most awe-inspiring style. All this time, the Raja was riding about here, there, and everywhere. At last, he lighted on the devotee, and asked whether he had seen anybody pass that way that night. "Yes, Your Majesty," was the reply. "A man passed not long since. I'm well aware that, of late, somebody has been up to all sorts of mischief and theft in your kingdom, and that nobody has been able to catch him. Sitting still here, I'm nevertheless able to know all that he does." "Then you know him?" said the Raja. "Well, no," was the reply. "That's to say, I've never seen him with my bodily eyes. I've only such knowledge of him as my magical power confers." "Then, is it impossible for him to be caught?" asked the Raja. "No, Your Majesty," answered the devotee. "He'll be caught. Go and try in that direction," pointing with his hand. The Raja galloped off in the direction indicated, but, finding no sign of anybody anywhere, after a while

²³ Cf. the description of the hermitage of the Kápálik in B. C. Chatterji's 'Kapálikundalá,' p. 14.

²⁴ The phallus, Śiva's chief symbol, to be seen everywhere in India. In Kalna, a small town of Burdwan District in Bengal, one sanctuary of Śiva consists of 108 small temples built in two concentric circles, with black or white marble *lingas* placed in each alternately, to every one of which *pūjā* is performed twice daily.

²⁵ Sk., *vilva*, the wood-apple tree. The leaf is a sort of trefoil, hence, probably, its consecration to Siva, regarded as combining in his own person all three divine functions.

came back, and said, "No, Ṭhākur. That way, there's nobody to be seen." The devotee answered, "Your Majesty, you had barely mounted and ridden away, when that rascal passed this very spot, going in that direction," again pointing. The Raja was off once more, before the devotee had well done speaking, but presently returned as unsuccessful as ever. In this way, he kept coming and going and never seeing anybody, till he was dead tired. Then, dismounting, he said to the devotee, "Ṭhākur, I'm too exhausted to stir another step. But you say, that fellow's passed here ever so often to-night. I can't understand why you didn't lay hold of him, seeing you got so many fine chances of doing so." The devotee answered, "Your Majesty, how should I seize him? Am I not a devotee, to whom honest man and thief, Raja and beggar, are all one?"²⁶ It's only in consideration of the fact that I'm living just now in your kingdom, that I've gone so far out of my way to help you as to show you again and again in what direction the fellow went. You couldn't catch him? How could I catch him, I should like to know—all the more that I can't on any account leave what I'm doing just now? If I once get up, all the fruit of my whole course of penance will be lost. All my toil and self-mortification will go for nothing. And another thing is this that, if I go in this guise to seize a thief, the thief is much more likely to seize me. I don't look like a Raja's officer, do I? Then, what's

²⁶ That all contraries—hot and cold, good and bad, etc.—are alike to him, is the mark of the "*siddha*," the man who has "attained." See 'Bhagavadgītā,' II, 38, 56 ff.; V, 3, 12. Of course, in literature, indifference to *moral* distinctions is not much emphasized.

the use of talking about my arresting a criminal ?” “ Well, what’s to be done ? ” said the Raja. “ I can think of only one plan,” was the reply. “ You put on my clothes and stay here for a while, taking care that no harm comes to my hermitage, and give me your clothes and your horse. Then I’ll go, and I’ve no doubt I shall catch the fellow. Of course, this sort of thing is no part of my duty. Still, as I’m living in your kingdom, I’m in a sense your subject, and, since a subject should do all he can for his Raja, perhaps my penance won’t be much the worse for my helping you. So, if you like to do as I suggest, take your seat here, and I’ll see if I can find the rascal.” “ Very good,” said the Raja. “ I can hardly move ; I’m so knocked up with rushing about the whole night. I shall be very glad to sit down for a bit.” So saying, he took off his clothes and arms, and handed them to the devotee, receiving from him in return his tiger-skin and other paraphernalia. The devotee arrayed himself in the Raja’s dress and arms, and, mounting his horse, rode off, leaving His Majesty in charge of his hermitage.

Disguised now as the Raja, the Brahman made his way straight to the palace. The men on guard at the gateway, never doubting that it was their master himself, rose and saluted him respectfully. He didn’t stop to speak to them, but passed straight on into the women’s quarters. He found the Rānī lying sound asleep, and, calling to her, said, “ Take off all your gold ornaments and give them to me to keep.”²⁷ Who knows but what that rascal will be

²⁷ Cf. LDB, pp. 177 f.—the theft of the Queen’s gold chain—and KKT, p. 120—the theft of jewels and money from the *thanadar*’s wife.

impudent enough to try to steal from my house next ? ” The Rání, only half-awaking, took off her ornaments, without very clearly knowing what she was doing. Picking them up, the Brahman went back at once to the gateway, and, calling the durwan, said, “ Listen. Nobody whatever is to be allowed to enter the palace to-night. If anybody tries to enter, no matter who he may be, seize him and shut him up in the lime-dungeon.²⁸ Be he devotee, family-priest, minister, or even Raja, let nobody go. Into the lime-dungeon with him, and to-morrow, at nine o’clock, fetch him before me into the audience-hall.” “ As Your Majesty commands,” said the durwan. The Brahman mounted his, or, rather, the Raja’s, horse again, and rode away. When he had gone some distance, he dismounted, threw off the Raja’s clothes, and, leaving the horse to wander wherever it chose, he returned to the garland-weaver’s house. “ Here, auntie. Take these,” said he, handing her the Rání’s gold ornaments. The garland-weaver was overjoyed to receive such a splendid gift.

For a long time, the Raja had sat patiently waiting for the devotee to return. Still, there was no sign of his coming. Beginning to get suspicious at last, he rose and wended his way back to the palace. Though the night was near an end, it was still dark when he reached the gateway. The durwan was awake and called, “ What rascal’s that ? ” The Raja was dumbfounded. Going nearer, he said, “ I’m the Raja.” “ Oh, you’re the Raja, are you ? ” replied

²⁸ Why “ lime-dungeon,” the narrator could not satisfactorily explain. Cf. No. VIII, p. 79, and CLP, II, p. 453. With the tricking of the Raja, cf. ‘ Sagas from the Far East,’ pp. 226 f.

the durwan. "Here, guards! Off to the lime-dungeon with the rascal!" "What do you mean?" cried the Raja. "Shut up!" was the retort. "Get along to the dungeon, you rascal." The Raja was fairly flabbergasted, but he began again, "I'm your Raja"—"None of your lies here," broke in the durwan. "The Raja was here a little ago, and, after visiting the Rání's apartments, rode out, dressed and armed. Get along with you at once, you rascal!" And the guards, seizing him by the scruff of the neck, walked him off to the lime-dungeon and locked him up. The Raja sat down on the ground, feeling utterly bewildered and dismayed. "What terrible disaster can have happened?" he said to himself. "What could the durwan mean by saying the Raja had been to the Rání's apartments? Ah! now I see it all! That devotee—he's no devotee, he's the rascal that has perpetrated all this devilry and theft! So clever a rascal I've never seen or heard of. And, to crown all, he's thrown dust in my own eyes, and so bamboozled me that he could make off with my clothes and horse before my very eyes and with my own consent. And what the villain may have done afterwards, when he got into the palace, there's no saying. What an unheard-of rogue!"

The poor Raja was left to such meditations in the lime-dungeon till nine in the morning, when the durwan, in obedience to his supposed master's orders, came, and, unlocking the door, saw to his horror that the prisoner was in very truth the Raja himself. Almost senseless with fear, as he thought he had only a few minutes to live, he fell down and grovelled

at the Raja's feet. But the Raja said, "Don't be afraid. Tell me all that has happened." "It's not much that I know," answered the durwan. "Late last night, a man, wearing your clothes and riding your horse, came to the gate. Never doubting that it was you, yourself, we let him pass without question. He went in, and, presently coming back, he said to us, 'If anybody comes to the gate to-night, seize him, and shut him up in the lime-dungeon. On no account, let anyone go; no matter who he may be or what he may say.' Your Majesty, we always obey the royal commands. Last night, too, we did so. We had no idea you would come in that guise. Consequently, in spite of your asserting that you were the Raja, we would not believe you." "Oh, all that is no matter now," said the Raja, and, hurrying into the palace, he quickly changed his dress and repaired to the Rání's apartments. When he questioned her as to what had happened during the night, she said, "I'm sure I don't know. I was lying in my room. The lamp was burning very dimly. More asleep than awake, I saw some one, dressed exactly like you, and whom I took to be you, enter the room. He said, 'Give me your ornaments to keep; there's great danger of thieves.' Still only half-awake, I gave him my ornaments, hardly knowing what I was doing. Again cautioning me, he left the room. That's all I know."

Hearing this, the Raja was more than ever astounded. For a long time he sat, thinking of one plan after another for catching the clever knave, but he could devise none that seemed at all likely to succeed. At last, he issued an order that pro-

clamation should be made by beat of drum in every quarter of the city, that whoever could catch the rogue, should be rewarded with half the kingdom and the princess's hand in marriage. When the Brahman youth heard of the proclamation, he went boldly to the Raja and said, "If Your Majesty gives me permission, I can bring about the arrest of the thief." "Haven't I made proclamation to that effect?" answered the Raja. "What further permission is required?" "Your Majesty," said the Brahman, "I am the man." "What proof can you give that your statement is true?" asked the Raja. Then the Brahman told his whole story from first to last. Hearing it, the Raja was filled with such admiration of his extraordinary cleverness that he didn't hesitate to give him his daughter's hand along with half of the kingdom.²⁹ Married to a beautiful wife and surrounded by luxury and splendour, the Brahman spent the rest of his life in perfect peace and happiness.

²⁹ Cf. the King's admiration and munificent rewarding of the thief's cleverness in STT, p. 43, and in No. XX, and the treatment of Shabrang, and the Day-Thief and the Night-Thief, on their confessions, in KKT, pp. 121 and 302. This accords with the ending of the story in its most ancient form—Herodotus, II, 121. In LBD, p. 181, the thieves are detected and executed. In KKT, p. 351, Sharaf is forced to plead guilty, and his hand is cut off. But the stories of Sharaf profess to be narratives of facts.

XX.

THE TRIPLE THEFT.

A PRINCE and his father's Chief Minister's son ¹ were very great friends. They sat together, they ate together, they went out to walk and play together—in fact, never for a moment in the day were they separate from one another, so fond were they of one another's company. But they were utterly idle—they would do no work whatever; nor would they spend any time at home with their parents. From morning to night, they roamed about, amusing themselves. By and by, they became very intimate with the Kotwal's son and the son of the Chief Merchant ² in the city. Thus they were now a band of four ³—each of them encouraging the rest to play all sorts of pranks.

The Raja saw that his son was every day becoming more and more of a good-for-nothing. He was making not the slightest attempt to learn any-

¹ See No. XXVI, Note 1. Cf. KSS, II, p. 566 and FOD, pp. 103 ff.

² Not merely the wealthiest, but the head of the community—a semi-official magnate.

³ The same four friends start out together to seek adventures in LDB, p. 261. Cf. the quartette of maidens in No. XXV. Four is frequently the number of brothers who set out on a quest. *E.g.*, 'The Four Wicked Sons and their Luck'—KKT, pp. 331 ff.

thing about the duties of a ruler, and paid no heed to his father's orders and advice. The Raja began to lose patience. His Minister succeeded no better in his efforts to induce his son to mend his ways. The Kotwal and the Merchant, too, saw that their sons had got completely beyond their control. Thus they were all alike angry and well-nigh hopeless when they sat down together one day to consider what should be done with the four young scapegraces. The Raja said, "When I'm gone, my kingdom will fall into some other Raja's hands." The Minister said, "When I'm gone, that fellow will bring our noble family to ruin and disgrace in less than no time." The Merchant said, "A big hole has already been made in the treasures I have amassed. Within my own lifetime, everything will have been squandered." The Kotwal said, "I daren't open my mouth to the young rascal. Being a Kotwal's son, he's of course got a desperately hot temper. If I find fault with him, no matter how gently, as like as not I shall get my head broken. So I've just to look on and say nothing." Seeing the others were quite at one with him, the Raja said, "Then there's only one thing we can do. When we go home, we must tell our wives to mix ashes with the rice before they serve up their sons' dinners.⁴ I'll order my wife to do so, and do you all do the same. Perhaps that'll bring the young fellows to their senses."

Having come to this understanding, they went away home, and each one said to his wife, "Look here. When your son comes in for dinner to-day, you must

⁴ Certain to be felt by the sons as one of the worst indignities that could be inflicted upon them,

give him ashes mixed with his rice." The wife was at first speechless with indignation, then she broke out, "What! Have I half-a-dozen sons? Is he not my only one? And I, with my own hand, am to put ashes in his rice?" But the husband, for once, would not give way. "Yes," said he. "That's just what you've got to do. Only one son, forsooth! Better an empty byre than a mischievous cow! Better you had been barren than borne a son like that! When a son brings his parents neither pleasure nor profit nor credit, but only loss and disgrace and sorrow, what food is fitter for him than ashes?" "Oh," retorted the wife, "what can you know about love for children? If you had carried them month after month below your heart as we have to do, you would have some idea how a mother feels for her son. And our son's a mere boy yet. Give him time to grow up and learn sense, and you'll see he'll attend to his duties. Don't use language like that to me about the poor darling." "Do you intend to obey or not?" answered the husband. "If you don't, well——. But, if you do look for your happiness from me, then you know what you've got to do." What could the poor wife do? For once, she had to hold her tongue and submit.

The Prince came home for his dinner. His mother as usual served up his rice to him, but, to-day, left him to eat alone. Not being able to help herself, she had, indeed, put a tiny piece of coal among the rice, though she first carefully washed it. But the Prince noticed it at once, and, calling his mother, asked, "How's this? Ashes in my rice! What

⁵ Common proverb,

does it mean? This is something new, and no mistake!" The poor mother at first kept silence, but, the Prince insisting on getting an explanation, she said: "You know very well you're going to the mischief as fast as you can. You won't attend to your duties, and, let the Raja say what he likes, you never pay the slightest heed. So he's given orders that you should get ashes in your plate." Hearing this, the Prince immediately rose up, leaving his rice untouched, and went straight to the Minister's house. The Minister's son, too, finding ashes in his dish, had spat out the mouthful of rice he had taken, got up, and left the room. When the Prince arrived, he was sitting outside the house. "Friend," said the Prince, "to-day they gave me ashes to eat!" "And me, too," was the reply. Together they hurried away to look up the Merchant's son and the Kotwal's. "Ashes have been our fate, too, to-day," said they, when the Prince and his companion had told their story. "Well, what's to be done now?" said the Prince. "It's out of the question for us to remain in this country any longer,"⁶ answered the Minister's son. "Let us go to some foreign land." "I quite agree with you," said the Prince. "Nor will we stay here!" cried the other two. "What

⁶ The sensitiveness of Hindu—at least, Bengali—young people to what they are pleased to consider insulting treatment, even from their parents, is something phenomenal. It is often satirized by playwrights. Apparently, it is nothing new. See KSS, II, p. 122—Ratnarekhā is so touchy that, when she gets a slap from her father for persistent disobedience, she goes off to the jungle and becomes a devotee of Śiva—and *ib.*, II, p. 436—a child dies of a broken heart, because his mother does not bring him his sweetmeat as usual,

affection can we be expected to retain for parents who, with their own hands, give us ashes to eat? Come, let us set out this very night." They all agreed to do so. The next question was, what should they take with them. "It must be things that are valuable, but easy to carry," said the Minister's son. All admitted the wisdom of this advice. During the day, they quietly made their preparations accordingly, and, when night fell, they started forth together.

They travelled on for many days, passing through and leaving behind kingdom after kingdom, forest after forest. At length, one day, they came to a place where four roads met, and there they halted. Then the Prince said, "Let us part here, each taking one of these roads. We shall all come back to this place after a week or two, and whichever of us meets with any adventure worth while, will tell the rest about it." All four approved of this plan, and forthwith they parted, each taking his own road.

After leaving his friends, the Prince travelled on for some days without seeing anything to interest him. But, at length, his road brought him to a very large city. Entering it, he rambled about in all directions, and was amazed at the magnificence of the bazars, ghats, and streets. Never in his life had he seen the like. So taken up was he with viewing the ever-new marvels which his eyes lighted on, that evening came on before he was aware it was much past midday. He now felt himself quite worn out, and sat down at the foot of a tree, in front of the Raja's palace. It began to get dark, but, nowhere he could see, did anybody light a lamp. Wondering greatly what the reason for this might be, he proceeded to question

the passers-by about it. Most walked on without paying any attention. One or two turned and looked at him, but nobody thought it worth while to stop and give him an answer. At last, seeing an old man approaching very slowly, he rose and went to meet him, and said, "Sir, in such a vast city as this, with such splendid bazars and ghats and mansions, how is it that no lights are to be seen, although it is now dusk?" "My dear fellow," was the reply. "You must be a stranger in this country, to ask such a question." "That's just what I am, sir," said the Prince. "It's only to-day I arrived here, and for the first time in my life." "It's easy to see that," answered the old man. "Nobody but a complete stranger could ask such a question as you have. You must know, then, the great house over there is the Raja's palace. Our Raja has one daughter, a girl of the most wonderful beauty. In a minute or two, you will see her appear on the terrace of the palace. So radiant is her beauty that, when she comes out upon the palace-roof, the whole city is brilliantly lighted up, and the people can carry on any kind of work as conveniently as during the day.⁷ The Princess remains on the terrace till

⁷ Cf. the Princess Labám—SIF, p. 158. The beauty of the Phulmati Rání lit up a dark room—*ib.*, p. 1. The Panch-Phul Rání shone like a glorious star in the dark jungle—FOD, p. 154. In 'The Rákshas's Palace,' the Princess dazzles the Prince's eyes like a flash of golden lightning—*ib.*, p. 224. When Kalingasená is born, she eclipses and darkens the blazing lamps in the chamber. She gleams even in the day-time, when a maiden—KSS, I, pp. 246 and 252. Hírálí—SIF, p. 69—the Princess in 'Chundan Raja'—FOD, p. 253—Somaprabhá—KSS, I, pp. 119 and 121—Bhadrá—*ib.*, I, p. 135—Tejasvatí—*ib.*, I, p. 129—Suryaprabhá—*ib.*, I, p. 425—Chitravat—CLER, p. 324—the re-born Bakáwalí—*ib.*, p. 336

after midnight. Wait a little, and you'll see for yourself." He had hardly finished speaking, when the Princess, arrayed in her jewels and with her long hair flowing loose, made her appearance on the terrace, attended by a few of her favourite companions, and, in a moment, the whole city was one blaze of light, and the citizens went about their

—are endowed with the same kind of luminous beauty. See also, KSS, II, pp. 133, 377, 547. 'Helena the Fair' is "fairer than the sun, brighter than the moon, and whiter than snow"—RRT, p. 253. When the beautiful Pulja is seated in the top of the cypress, the horses of the King's attendants take fright at her "rays," so wonderfully beautiful is she—HGA, I, p. 67. When the Prince's mother opens the door of the glass hall where the 'Goat-Maiden' is sitting, the radiance within terrifies her—*ib.*, I, p. 130. The beauty of the 'Fair Lady with the Seven Veils' is so lustrous that it shines through them all—GOS, I, pp. 80 f. We meet, also, with resplendently beautiful heroes. The body of the Panch-Phul Rání's suitor, when transfixed on the hedge of spears, dazzles the eyes of her parents, shining with a glory like the moonlight—FOD, p. 150. The moment the 'Boy with the Moon on his Forehead' enters the bazar, it is suddenly lighted up—LDB, p. 246. Táj-ul-mulúk's face surpasses the glory of the sun—CLER, p. 243.

Originally, the possessors of such effulgent beauty may have been personifications of celestial luminaries, but, subsequently, it became a mere theatrical property with which any hero or heroine was invested, whom the story-tellers wished to describe as surpassingly beautiful. Even the hermit, Kasyapa, is said to have been like pure molten gold in appearance, full of brightness—KSS, I, p. 431—and the womb of the mother of the unborn Buddha is described as resembling a lustrous transparent gem, enclosing a white cord, while the Buddha, himself, is born "strahlend in Glanz"—Kern, 'Buddhismus,' I, pp. 29 and 30. Spenser ascribes the same luminous beauty to Una:

"Her angel's face,
As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place"—

'Faerie Queene,' Bk. I, C. III, 4.

business just as if it were the forenoon. The Prince was astounded. "What miracle is this?" thought he to himself. "What beauty! I've never in my life seen the like. Seen? I've never heard of such wonderful loveliness. The world can contain nothing to match it! I must get this Princess as my wife!" So fascinated was he by her beauty, that, all night, he could think of nothing but how he might win her for himself.

Next day, he began to make inquiries about her, in the hope of being able to devise some plan for effecting his purpose. But the information he obtained, showed that an even more difficult task than he had imagined, lay before him. The Raja, it seemed, had issued a proclamation that he would give his daughter in marriage to the man who should be able to commit three thefts—one at the ferry, one in the bazar, and one in the palace—and yet succeed in completely evading detection.⁸ Now, there dwelt in the city a pundit, called Hōrēkrishṭō,⁹ who possessed unheard-of skill in astrology. Whatever sort of occurrence required to be investigated, Hōrēkrishṭō would sit down and make his calculations, and never failed in this way to find out all about it. Not to speak of the present, even the past and the future were within the scope of his powers of divination.¹⁰ He was a great man at

⁸ That the 'Master-Thief' obtain the Princess's hand is undoubtedly the correct *dénouement* for stories of this cycle, but the prescribing by her father of a display of marvellous proficiency in theft as the "Marriage-Task" to be performed by the suitor, seems unusual. On "Marriage-Tasks," see MCF, pp. 17, 20, 25, 98.

⁹ Sk., *Harakṛishṇa*. *Hara* = Śiva. Cf. names like Śivanārāyaṇa.

¹⁰ With the astrologer's knowledge, cf. that of the *Khelāpārī Rāṇī*,

court, and stood in the highest favour with the Raja. For, thanks to him, not a single case had yet occurred of anybody's committing theft without being very soon detected. Consequently, the Princess was still unmarried, and there appeared to be little likelihood that anybody would ever succeed in fulfilling the conditions upon which her hand could be won.

Learning all this, the Prince thought to himself, "This looks an impossibly difficult business. I'm afraid it isn't written in my destiny that I'm to marry the Princess. Anyhow, I'll away back to the cross-roads, and wait there for my friends. Let me hear what they say about it. If I succeed in winning the Princess, good and well. If not, I'll put an end to my life." Having come to this resolution, the Prince returned to the trysting-place, where, in the course of a few days, his three friends also turned up, one after another. The four were overjoyed at

who knows at once what happens in any country—SIF, p. 95—and that of the Fakir in 'The Bel-Princess,' who, sitting in the jungle, yet knows what happens in the Fairy country—*ib.*, p. 140. See, also, KSS, I, pp. 380 f. and I, p. 105; GHT, II, pp. 166 ff. and 183 ff.; HGA, I, p. 83. The belief that certain persons possessed such extraordinary powers of perception, probably owes its origin to the phenomena of Clairvoyance and the like—MCF, pp. 308 ff. and 315, Note. The Indian account of such alleged omniscience as effected by astrological calculation or ascetic *dhyaṇa*—profound meditation—seems to be a later semi-rationalistic explanation of it. Cf. the Arab belief in what can be done by "geomancy"—CLER, pp. 60 f.; Lane's 'Modern Egyptians,' I, Ch. XII. See, also, No. XIX, Note 21. At the same time, Indian Folk-tale narrators are quite aware that some astrologers are swindlers. See KSS, II, p. 59. An astrologer, in order to gain a name, foretells the death of his own son in seven days. On the morning of the seventh day, he kills the boy, himself, and announces the fulfilment of his prediction, thus establishing his reputation among his credulous neighbours.

meeting again, and proceeded to recount their adventures. When the Minister's son, the Kotwal's son, and the Merchant's son had told their stories, the Prince related his experiences. He expatiated at great length on the unearthly beauty of the Princess and his own fervent desire to win her, but added with a deep sigh, "The conditions imposed by the Raja are so extraordinarily difficult to fulfil that I haven't the slightest hope the Princess will ever be mine." "What are the conditions?" asked the Minister's son. "I don't suppose they can be something quite beyond the power of man, like the breaking of Śiva's bow."¹¹ What does the Raja require to be done?" "Oh, it's something quite unheard-of," was the reply, "something absolutely impossible. It's useless to discuss it. "Tush!" said the other. "Every day, how many impossible things are accomplished! and yet what this Raja requires to be done, will never be! Nonsense! What is it? Out with it! I promise you to do all in my power to help you. And you'll see—somehow or other, I'll manage to bring about your marriage with the Princess." The Prince heaved another deep sigh. "You're holding out hopes to me that are utterly vain," said he. "Listen, however. The Raja has made the condition that, if anyone can commit three thefts within the bounds of his kingdom and yet remain undetected, he shall obtain the Princess in marriage. But any sort of theft won't do. One must be committed at the ferry, a second, in the bazar, and a

¹¹ The "Marriage-Task" set by King Janaka to the suitors of his daughter Sītā, was the bending of Śiva's bow. Rāmachandra not only bent but broke it—to the great disgust of Paraśu-Rāma.

third, in the palace itself. In any other kingdom, indeed, one might do all that without being caught. But this Raja's court is attended by a Brahman pundit, called Hōrēkrishṭō, who possesses an unrivalled knowledge of astrology. Such are his powers of divination that nothing whatever can be kept hidden from him. Therefore I say that to hope to succeed in this business is mere foolishness." "Is that all?" cried the Minister's son. "Then, believe me, you've no cause to despair. What is there in all this that's beyond the power of man to accomplish? Cheer up! Let's make for the city at once, and get to work to obtain your desire for you. You may be sure, no effort on my part will be wanting. Before I'm done, I'll have you married to the Princess." The Prince was much encouraged by the hearty words of his friend, and the four comrades at once set about making preparations for their journey. By the advice of the Minister's son, they bought, amongst other things, a great many different suits of clothes. And, when everything was packed up, they set out on their journey.

Just before one reached the Raja's capital, the road was crossed by a river, over which travellers had to pass in a ferry-boat. When the four friends arrived at the ferry-ghat, they found the boat tied up there, and at once got into it and sat down. That day, it happened, the boat was in charge of the ferryman's little son. Seeing they wished to cross, the boy said to them, "The fare is sixteen *pon* cowries¹² a head." "All right," they replied. "We'll

¹² Sk., *paṇa* = 80. 1280 cowries = two annas, which, at present exchange, would be twopence, and, when the rupee was at par,

pay it." Thereupon, the boy rowed them across. The others then paid down the proper fare. But the Minister's son offered only sixteen bad cowries, which the ferryman's boy refused to accept. "You'd better take them," said the passenger, "they're all I've got." The ferryman, himself, happened to be engaged in some work a short way off. So the boy shouted to his father, "I say, father, here's a man wishes to give me sixteen bad cowries." The father understood him to mean that the fare was offering him sixteen *pon* cowries, but that sixteen among them were bad. Accordingly, he shouted back, "Oh, take them and have done. I can't come just now to attend to the matter, myself." The boy was surprised ; however, he took the sixteen bad cowries, and the four friends proceeded on their way. Before entering the city, they changed their dress. They then rented one of the finest houses they could see in it, and took up their quarters there.

When his work was done, the ferryman came and asked his boy to render an account of the day's earnings. Finding the sixteen bad cowries amongst the cash, he said, "Where's the rest of this fare?" "Why, that's the whole," replied the boy. "Didn't I tell you he was offering sixteen bad cowries?" "Oh, I didn't understand what you said in that way," said the ferryman. "I supposed he was offering the full sixteen *pon*, but that sixteen single cowries among them were bad." "Not at all," was the reply. "Altogether sixteen cowries, and every

threepence. A decidedly high fare at a ferry. One or two pice are usually charged. Payments of such huge numbers of cowries are, of course, never made in real life.

one of them useless ! ” “ What a swindle ! ” cried the father. “ It’s plain that a thief has got into the town. I must go to court and inform the Raja of this. ” And he set off at once to do so.

The four friends stayed only a few days in the house they had taken. Then they rented another in a different part of the city, and shifted their quarters to it. A day or two later, they moved to another house. And they made a point of never wearing the same suit of clothes two days running. When they had spent a week or two in this fashion, constantly changing their dwelling and their dress, at last the Minister’s son said, “ Well, the theft at the ferry has been accomplished. It’s time now to see what we can do in that way in the bazar. ” So the four comrades sallied forth. They walked through street after street, till the Minister’s son, noticing a shop where refreshments were sold, said, “ Come, let us have something to eat. ” They went into the shop and sat down, and the shopkeeper, seeing they were gentlemen, attended to their wants with great zeal. When they had all regaled themselves heartily, the Minister’s son said to the other three, “ You fellows walk on. I’ll square up with the shopkeeper, and follow you in a minute. ” After they had gone, he sat on for a while, gossiping most affably with the shopkeeper, who thought he had never fallen in with so jolly a gentleman. Their talk being ended, the Minister’s son said, “ I’m sorry I’ve no cash about me, but my budgerow’s on the river, just over yonder. If you come along with me, I’ll pay you. ” “ Mōhášoy, ” replied the man, “ I’m too busy to leave the shop, myself. But here’s my little boy. Take

him with you, and pay the pice to him. He'll bring it to me all right." "Very good," said the gentleman. "He hasn't far to go. He'll be back in a minute or two."

Thereupon he got up and walked away, followed by the boy. On and on he went—through one street after another, through one lane after another, yet showing no sign of being any nearer his destination. The boy was quite a little fellow, and began to be fairly worn out with so long a walk. "How far have we got to go, sir?" he asked. "Why, we're just at the place," was the reply, and on they went through a few more streets and lanes. At last, the boy was dead beat. "Please, sir," said he, "would you tell me your name? I really can't go any farther." "My name's 'Baba,'" ¹³ answered the Minister's son, still walking on. The boy followed, crying, "Baba, give me pice. Baba, give me pice." After a while, the Minister's son sat down at a shop-door, and said to the shopkeeper, "Mōháshoy, would you be so good as to let me have a smoke." The shopkeeper filled and lighted his hookah, and handed it to him. In the course of his wanderings, the Minister's son had seized the opportunity, when he

¹³ The common word for "Papa" in Bengali. Such plays upon words are a favourite *motif* in Folk-tales. Cf. Odysseus's giving his name to Polyphemus as *Oĩtis*—No-man—and the consequent refusal of the other Cyclopes to come to his help when he says that "No-man" is slaying him—Odyssey, IX, 364 ff. and 407 ff.—also, the numerous Sagas in which a man tells an elf or the like that his name is "Nainsel"—Hartland, 'Science of Fairy Tales,' p. 173—or some other word meaning "Myself"—e.g., 'Selberjedan'—Von Leyen, 'Deutsches Sagenbuch,' IV, p. 198—and, afterwards, when he has done the elf some injury, the latter's companions disregard his cries for help, because he says, "'Myself' has hurt me."

was passing through a deserted street, to throw away his fine dress, keeping only an old, torn *dhuti*, which he had put on below, before coming out. Now, without shoes or any covering for the upper part of his body, he had all the appearance of being miserably poor. While he sat smoking, the boy kept on whimpering from time to time, "Baba, give me pice! Baba, give me pice!" The Minister's son said to the shopkeeper, "Möháshoy, see how wretchedly poor I am. It's become simply impossible for me to live. I've a wife and half-a-dozen children, and, though I labour my hardest, what I earn won't buy enough food for us, let alone other necessities. Look! This boy of mine has followed me about since early morning, crying, 'Baba, give me pice! Baba, give me pice!' And no wonder either. He had no supper last night, and has had no breakfast to-day. And I haven't a single pice to give him to buy food, for, to-day, I've been able to find no work. So I've made up my mind that, if anybody will buy him, I shall sell him. Whoever buys him, will feed him, and, with what I get for him, I shall be able to support my wife and other children for a long time to come. Better sell one child than see my whole family starve. I can't think of any other means of saving them. Möháshoy, if you'd be so good as to buy him, you'd be doing me a very great kindness. Just think, Möháshoy. It's now past three in the afternoon, and not one of us has had a bite yet, and last night, too, we had nothing to eat. I can't go about seeking for work any longer—I haven't the strength left to lift one foot after the other—and this child's dunning me for pice, when I have no pice to give him, is like

to drive me mad." Thus he spoke, and, all the time he was speaking, the boy kept breaking in with, "Baba, give me pice! Baba, give me pice!" The shopkeeper's heart was touched by his pitiable story. "Truly, yours is a hard case," said he. "Well, how much do you want for the boy?" "Mōhāshoy," the Minister's son replied, "you're a wealthy man. You must have bought boys times without number, whereas I've always been too poor to buy a slave, and it's only now I've been able to bring myself to the point of selling one of my own children. Who could endure to sell the very blood of his own body, if the direst necessity didn't compel him? Give me what you like. I shall be glad to take it, whatever it is." The shopkeeper felt so sorry for the poor man that he said, "Well, I'll give you five thousand rupees." "Victory to you!" cried the other. "May you become a raja! I never in my life saw so many rupees. A sum like that will be more than enough to keep the whole of us all our lives. Mōhāshoy, you're the poor man's father and mother." Saying this, he raised both his hands and began to bless the shopkeeper with great fervour. The latter then counted out the money, which the Minister's son gathered up, and at once made off.

The boy was for following him, crying, "Baba, give me pice! Baba, give me pice!" more loudly than ever. But the shopkeeper, running after him, caught him and brought him back, saying, "Where are you going? Your father (*baba*) has sold you." Hearing this, the boy began to weep still more bitterly. "What good'll weeping do?" said the

shopkeeper. "Cheer up, my little man. Just think ; at home, you got nothing to eat, and no nice clothes to wear. Here, you'll get plenty of food and be always well dressed. Your father has sold you, and you've got to stay with me. What's the use of making yourself unhappy." Of course, the little fellow was not to be comforted. The shopkeeper might say what he liked ; the child only wept more and more piteously.

Meanwhile, a great to-do was going on in his home. His mother was weeping and wailing and making a terrible uproar. His father was utterly dumbfounded. "What on earth can have become of the boy ?" said he. "The Babu said his budgerow was lying in the river close by, and that the boy would be back with the money in a minute or two. Now, he's been away for hours, and there's no sign of his coming back. Did anybody ever hear of the like ?" The neighbours, learning what had happened, went out searching in all directions. The shopkeeper himself wandered on and on through the city, half-crazy with grief. At length, he came to the shop where the boy had been sold. As soon as he saw his father, the child rushed into his arms. The man who had bought him, followed, and seized hold of him. The father pulled one way, and he pulled the other. "What are you pulling at my child for ?" said the father. "Just listen to his impudence !" cried the shopkeeper. "I've bought him from his father and paid for him. Where have you turned up from, my man, and what have you to do with the boy ? Let go !" "And who had any business to sell my boy ? That's what I should like to know," answered

the father. "I sent him with a Babu who had dined at my shop, to his budgerow, to get the payment. He didn't come back. I've turned the whole neighbourhood upside down, searching for him. Now I find him in your shop, and you say you bought him from his father. Are you drunk, or wrong in the head, or what?" "You're a thorough rascal," retorted the other shopkeeper. "I counted down five thousand rupees for him to his father—the man he, himself, kept calling father all the time. Just ask the people who were standing by then, whether this is not the case." The neighbours all cried, "Yes, that's quite true. He did buy the boy from his father." But the eating-house-keeper's neighbours, who had come along with him, shouted back, "How can that be? *This* is the father." The quarrel grew hotter and hotter. At last, they all betook themselves to the court, and begged the Raja to settle the matter. The Raja heard the statements of both parties, took a lot of evidence, and, seeing the case was quite clear, made the boy over to the eating-house-keeper. The other man said, "But, Your Majesty, what about the five thousand rupees I paid for him?" "What more can be said about them except that you have been finely swindled?" replied the Raja.

The father went away rejoicing, and the other shopkeeper went away grumbling, leaving the Raja greatly disturbed in mind. He, of course, felt sure that this affair and that of the cheating at the ferry, which had been reported to him a week or two before, were somehow connected. "See here," said he to his Chief Minister: "two thefts have been

committed about the same time at the ferry and in the bazar, and the thief is still at large. What's to be done ? ” “ Oh, send for Hōrēkṛiṣṭṭō,”¹⁴ was the reply. “ Yes, that's the best thing to do,” answered the Raja, and gave the order. The royal messenger hurried to the old pundit's house, and informed him of the Raja's summons. “ You go back and say I'm coming immediately,” replied Hōrēkṛiṣṭṭō in a great flurry, and, quickly marking his forehead with sandal-wood paste, and putting on a silk *dhuti* and *chhadōr* and a wrapper about his body, inscribed with the names of his patron god,¹⁵ and taking his staff in his hand and his astrological books under his arm, he repaired to the court as quickly as his age permitted. The Raja received him with all the honour due to the man whom everybody looked upon as unrivalled in his knowledge of the Śāstras and by far the greatest diviner of the day. He rose from his throne and came forward to meet him, and led him to a seat among the principal grandees of the court. Hōrēkṛiṣṭṭō gave the Raja his blessing, and sat down. Then the latter said, “ Mōhāshoy, a most remarkable thing has happened. You know, of course, how I have promised that, if anyone succeeds in committing thefts at the ferry, in the bazar, and in the palace, without being caught, he shall obtain my daughter in marriage, and that, hitherto, everybody who has tried to fulfil this condition has failed. But now, all of a sudden, a thief has turned up from nobody knows where, and

¹⁴ Cf. No. XIX, p. 165. Also, Lane's ‘Modern Egyptians,’ I, pp. 365 f.

¹⁵ Sk., *Nāmāvalī*.

has committed two most remarkable thefts at the ferry and in the bazar. He paid the ferryman only sixteen cowries instead of sixteen *poṇ*—and every one of the sixteen bad, absolutely worthless! And he not only paid an eating-house-keeper nothing at all for his dinner, but actually decoyed away and sold the man's boy for five thousand rupees! Now, it only remains for him to steal something from the palace, and I shall have to give him my daughter! What an intolerable disgrace that'll be to us all!" "Oh," replied Hōrēkṛiṣṭhō, "there's no reason for Your Majesty's being anxious. No matter where the thief may have hid himself—in heaven or earth or the world below—Hōrēkṛiṣṭhō's divination will find him out, and you'll soon have him laid by the heels. It'll take me just a minute to make my calculations and let you know where to lay hands on him." Saying this, he unwrapped ¹⁶ his books and began to reckon.

Meanwhile, the Minister's son, who had rejoined his companions, was well aware that there would soon be a hue and cry after him. He, too, knew something about astrology,¹⁷ and, quickly making a calculation, divined that Hōrēkṛiṣṭhō, in obedience to a summons from the Raja, had gone to the court, and would not be long in finding out where the thief was. So he said to his friends, "We must get away from here at once. At this very moment, that old rascal will be telling the king that we're in this house." Forthwith, the friends, changing their

¹⁶ Books are carried about, wrapped in a sheet of cotton. The bundle is called a "dāftār."

¹⁷ From this point, cf. No. XIX, pp. 165 ff.

dress, hurried to another of the houses they had rented. Hōrēkrishṭō had just then finished his calculations, and told the Raja the thief was sitting in such-and-such a house. The royal officers were immediately dispatched, and ran as fast as they could to the place. They found nothing but an empty house, apparently quite uninhabited. Much annoyed, they went back to the Raja, and said, "It's all humbug, Your Majesty. There's nobody staying in that house." Hearing this, the Raja turned upon the pundit, "How now, Mōhāshoy? Is this the result of all your boasted divining?" Hōrēkrishṭō was badly put out. However, making another calculation, he said, "Your Majesty, I can positively assure you, the thief's in such-and-such a house"—describing the one the four friends had now gone to, as well as the dress they were wearing. Again, the officers were dispatched in hot haste. But, this time, too, the Minister's son had divined what was taking place. He told his companions to change their clothes at once, and, himself doing the same, hurried away from the house along with them. The officers, a second time finding nothing but an empty house, returned in high dudgeon. The Raja, on receiving their report, lost patience altogether, and said to Hōrēkrishṭō, "Your divination's all a fraud, Mōhāshoy." The poor astrologer was utterly dumbfounded. "Your Majesty," he faltered out, "this is no ordinary thief." "D'ye think we need astrology to know that much?" interrupted the Raja, whose temper was rising fast. "Your Majesty," humbly replied the pundit, "you know the like of this never happened before. However, I'll go home and make very careful calculations,

and shall let you know all about the thief to-morrow.” “Very well,” said the Raja, “but let’s have no repetition of to-day’s performance.”

The astrologer made his obeisance and departed. As he walked slowly along with bent head, he thought sadly to himself, “Ah, it looks as if now, in my old age, I’m to lose all the credit I’ve enjoyed so long. The calculations were right enough. I never before made a mistake, nor have I made any now. It’s my star that’s unfavourable to me. That’s the cause of this disaster. Ah, to think how all the citizens looked up to me, and what honour was paid to me at court—for which of the grandees received as much attention from the Raja as I did? And now I’m to lose it all over the affair of this wretched thief!” Suddenly, his meditations were interrupted by a man who came up to him and said, “Thākur Mōhāshoy, somebody wishes to see you on very important and urgent business. It’ll pay you well to go.” The unsuspecting astrologer, without hesitation, turned and went along with the stranger.

This was the Merchant’s son. After quitting the second house, the four friends had begun to say to one another, “How long is this sort of thing to go on?” After thinking for a minute, the Minister’s son said, “We must give Hōrēkrishṭō such a lesson as’ll be more than enough for him. Till he’s knocked out, we shall have to spend our time changing our house and our clothes. Day and night, I shall have to keep the chalk in my hand, calculating what he’s up to. If I lay it down, long enough to rub the lime from some betel before putting it in my mouth, we shall be done for.” Accordingly, the Merchant’s

son was sent to call the astrologer, and the other three friends sat, awaiting his return, in one of their houses. Presently, the messenger arrived with the pundit, but, instead of leading him in, took him to one of the windows, and there stood still outside. "What sort of a place is this you've brought me to?" said Hōrēkṛiṣṭhō. "And who is it that wishes to see me?" Evidently, he was getting frightened and suspicious. The Merchant's son reassured him, saying, "Wait. He'll be here in a minute." And, sure enough, while he was still speaking, his three comrades came up to the window from inside the room. "There he is, and two of his friends with him," said the Merchant's son. "Then, let us go inside that I may find out what he wants with me," replied Hōrēkṛiṣṭhō. "No," said the Minister's son from the inside, "you needn't trouble to come in. I've something to say to you, that's all." "Very well, say away, my man," answered the pundit. The young man said, "We know what a profoundly learned man you are, and how you never err in your divinations. No matter where a thief may hide, you can tell the police where to find him. Now, the fact is, we are thieves. But our line of business is a very humble one. We don't venture to steal valuable things, nor to burgle big people's houses. We take only plantains, radishes, and the like. Now, look here. We poor beggars have never done any great harm to anybody, and we don't wish to. So we beg of you, if any time, when you're divining in order to find a thief, the name of one of us should come out, you won't betray us. If you do, you'll gain no credit—surely it's beneath a man

like you to help to catch poor fellows who steal such trash as plantains and radishes—but, on the other hand, it'll be the ruin of us. Moreover, you'll get nothing from the Raja for betraying such insignificant thieves, whereas, if you promise not to split on us, we'll give you as big a reward as we can." "Very good," replied the pundit with great heartiness. "I'm sure I have no objection to that arrangement. Steal as many plantains and radishes as ever you like. Much that'll matter to anybody. I won't let on I know anything about you. For that matter, if you pay me well, you may steal from the palace itself with a perfectly easy mind, so far as I am concerned. All the Raja can do is to pay me for giving information, and, if you pay me to keep quiet, that's equally satisfactory to me. Well, if that's all your business, I'll be going now." The Minister's son said, "Oh, we can't let you go without giving you a trifle, just to ratify our bargain. We wish it were more, but it's all we have at present. Reach your hand in through the window." The Brahman joyfully did as he was bidden, when the Minister's son seized his hand and cut off a joint from one of his fingers. And, immediately, all four disappeared. The astrologer hadn't the slightest idea who they were. It was darkening when the messenger met him, and, besides, all had muffled themselves up in their wrappers for protection from the evening chill. Almost beside himself with pain, and cruelly disappointed by losing a finger when he was hoping to receive a gift, he made his way home with great difficulty. There he shut himself up, and, for many days to come, absolutely refused to leave

his house. He was wild with shame and anger. Moreover, his wound was slow in healing.

Thus, for the present, a stop was put to all thief-catching by divination in the Raja's court. The four friends took another house, and went about as they liked, with easy minds. The Minister's son daily bathed early, marked his forehead with sandal-wood paste, and put on a silk *dhuti* and *chhadör*.¹⁸ Thus got up like a high-class Brahman pundit, he betook himself to the Raja's hall of audience. Soon the Prince again began to get impatient. "How long is this to go on?" said he. "And how much nearer the accomplishment of our purpose is it bringing us?" "Brother," replied the Minister's son, "doing things in a hurry will spoil all. We must proceed with the utmost deliberation. And is it a small thing to have effected two thefts out of three without detection? All that remains now, is to steal something from the palace, and the whole business is finished. At present, I'm going every day to the court, and am picking up all the information I can about the royal household. To steal from the palace is no easy job. If we take any step without the greatest caution, we shall all be done for. Be patient, and, before long, you will obtain the desire of your heart."

Having thus reassured his friend, he continued daily to attend court, till he had got to know all about the internal arrangements of the palace, without arousing the slightest suspicion. He even contrived one day to gain admission to the inner part of it and see the Raja's bed-chamber. The guards were his

¹⁸ Cf. No. IX, p. 97.

chief difficulty. Night and day, they were at their posts in front of the entrance. Not even a fly could enter, unobserved by them. For long, the Minister's son was quite at a loss what to do. At last, he provided himself with a number of stout iron pegs. Then, one dark night, putting a number of woman's ornaments on one arm and leaving the other bare, he took the pegs and a hammer, also Hōrēkrishṭō's finger-joint, and made his way, unnoticed, to the back of the palace. He found the wall quite suitable for fixing the pegs, but how was he to hammer them in without the noise awakening the inmates? He was standing in great perplexity over this unforeseen difficulty, when the gong beside the guard-room began to sound.¹⁹ At once, it occurred to him that this noise was quite loud enough to drown that of his hammer, and, without a moment's delay, he began to fix his pegs. Ascending step by step, as he put in one peg after another, he succeeded in reaching the window of the Raja's bed-chamber. He opened it noiselessly and entered the room. The beds of the Raja and the Rāñī were placed in the middle of the floor, a short distance apart.²⁰ Seeing this, he softly lay down in the space between them. Both Raja and Rāñī were sound asleep. Then the Minister's son, raising his bare arm, began to take off the Rāñī's ornaments. This done, raising his other arm, which was covered with women's ornaments, he began very gently to remove the Raja's ring from his finger. The Raja stirred and half-awoke, but, feeling the

¹⁹ Cf. LDB, pp. 176 f.

²⁰ The arrangement of the furniture in No. XI, p. 109, was apparently the same.

ornaments coming against his body, thought the hand touching him must be the Rání's, so he merely pushed it away, and fell asleep again. Having secured the ring, the thief fixed Hōrēkṛiṣṭḥ's finger-joint on a thin slip of bamboo, and began to move it up and down over the Raja's body.²¹ The skin of the old pundit's finger being hard and rough, the Raja awoke the moment it touched him, and, thinking a thief must have entered his room, seized his sword, which lay on the bed beside him, and slashed out in the direction of the finger. It fell off the bamboo-splinter upon his body, and, instantly, the Minister's son rushed from the room. Feeling the finger fall upon him, the Raja said to himself, "Ah, the thief's as good as caught." He got up, lit the lamp, and awoke the Rání. She was astounded to find her ornaments gone. The Raja said, "Oh, never mind. A thief has been here and taken them away. But, as soon as he touched me, I struck out at him. And, see, I've cut off his finger! As soon as it's day, I'll have a search made, and whoever has lost a finger, will be arrested." As he spoke, he happened to glance at his own hand, and was dumb-founded to see no ring.²²

The Raja waited in great impatience till daybreak. Then, proceeding at once to his hall of audience, he ordered his officers to go out without delay, and make a thorough search in all directions. Whoever was

²¹ Present-day thieves are said to tickle sleepers gently to make them roll about without awaking, and so allow their wrappers to be unwound from their bodies. Cf. KKT, p. 299. But here the intention was to rouse the King.

²² With the above incident, cf. LDB, pp. 174 ff.

found to have a finger cut off, was to be seized and brought before him. "Last night," said he, "a theft was committed in the palace. But I cut off the thief's finger. Now, we have only to find the hand the finger fits." The officers hurried away and began to turn the whole city upside-down in their search for a man with a cut-off finger. Not finding any such, they began to run in everybody who had a finger a little too short or even somewhat crooked. In this way, hundreds of people were produced in court. Of course, nobody's hand was found to fit the finger, and the Raja had just to release them again. This sort of fun went on for about a week. All the time, the Minister's son continued to attend court, disguised as a pundit, and, as he got many opportunities of displaying his cleverness, he soon stood high in the royal favour. At length, one morning, he said to the Prince, "The time's come for you to go and declare yourself to the Raja as the thief. But it won't do for me to appear in the business. You must tell the whole story, yourself. Here are the Rání's ornaments and the Raja's ring, which you will produce to accredit your statements. Furthermore, when I committed the theft in the palace, I left your armlet,²³ inscribed with your name, in a hole in the floor under the Raja's own bed. So, by way of proving beyond all doubt that you are the thief, you will ask the Raja to direct a search to be made for it. When the Raja sees it, he'll be completely convinced of the truth of your assertions, and,

²³ Not a bracelet, but an arm-plate inscribed with a *Mantra* or the like, supposed to possess some magical virtue, and worn as an amulet. See 'Enc. of Rel. and Eth.,' III, p. 443; MWR, p. 204.

moreover, will learn to what family you belong." In this way, being thoroughly coached by his friend, the Prince, with his other two comrades, repaired to the court. The Minister's son went by himself, as usual, in pundit guise. They found the Raja sitting in deep dejection over his failure to catch the thief. Presently, the Minister's son rose and said, "Your Majesty, pretty well everybody in the city—young or old, man or woman, boy or girl—has been produced in court, and their fingers looked at. But what about Hōrēkrishṭō ? And how is it he never attends now of his own accord ?" "You're quite right," replied the Raja. "It's an age since Hōrēkrishṭō put in an appearance here. Let him be summoned at once." A messenger hurried off to the astrologer's house, and told him the Raja required his presence in the darbār at once. He would fain have excused himself—his finger was not yet quite healed—but the Raja's command was peremptory.

As soon as he appeared, the Minister's son cried, "Look ! Your Majesty, Hōrēkrishṭō has lost a finger-joint." The Raja, greatly excited, immediately, with his own hand, applied the severed joint to Hōrēkrishṭō's mutilated finger, and found that, in colour of skin and every other respect, the two exactly corresponded. Furious with rage, he roared, "You base villain ! All these years, you've eaten my rice and now you perpetrate this sort of treachery against me ; it's easy to see now why your calculations turned out all wrong. If it had been anybody else, I would have had him impaled this very minute. As it is," he went on, turning to his guards, "I can't have him put to death, seeing he's a Brahman. But

take him away, have his head shaved, and buttermilk poured over him, and turn him out of the city.²⁴ Hōrēkṛishṭō was too much amazed to stir or say a single word. But the cruel sense of humiliation and affront made his eyes fill with tears. The officers approached, and were on the point of laying hold of him, when, on a sign from the Minister's son, the Prince stepped forward and cried, "Your Majesty, the Brahman is innocent, I am the thief!" "And who, pray, may you be?" asked the astonished Raja. The Prince then told the whole story of the three thefts from beginning to end—representing himself as the thief—and, when he had finished, held out to the Raja his own ring and the Rānī's ornaments, adding, "If Your Majesty desires further evidence that I speak the truth, let a search be made under your bed. My amulet, which I left concealed when I stole the ring and jewels, will be found there." Search was at once made, and the amulet found and brought to the Raja. The moment he saw it and learned from the inscription who the Prince was, he jumped down from his throne and embraced him fervently. He then begged pardon of Hōrēkṛishṭō,

²⁴ Brahmins often go with shaved heads, but the *śikhā* or *ṭiki*—little tuft or pigtail on the top of the head—is carefully excepted from tonsure. Complete shaving is the equivalent of decapitation in the case of a Brahman—Manu, VIII, 379—banishment, of mutilation—*ib.*, VIII, 124. Cf. CLP, II, p. 453. Drenching with buttermilk, as a penal indignity, was probably introduced into India by the Musalmans. It may be of Persian or Babylonian origin. Cf. the use of lime in CLP, *loc. cit.* The angry Raja was bent on inflicting as much in the way of punishment as he dared on Hōrēkṛishṭō, but is represented as scrupulously observing Hindu law. The Raja, in No. XIX, orders a Brahman to be impaled offhand—p. 157.

and ordered preparations for the celebration of his daughter's marriage with the Prince to be made without delay. Soon after it took place, the Prince, with his wife and his three friends, returned to his own country. In a few years his father died, and he became Raja, and appointed his three friends to the offices of their fathers, who were now very old men. Loyally assisted by them, he reigned long and happily.

XXI.

THE WITCH'S¹ DINNER.

ONE day, a certain herdsman felt a great longing for some cakes. So he went home and said to his mother, "I want some cakes to eat." The old woman answered, "Child, how is a poor woman like me to makes cakes for you? Where am I to get rice, and where am I to get sugar, and where am I to get milk?" The herdsman said, "Oh, I'll supply you with all these." Then his mother answered, "Very well, if you do that, I can prepare the cakes for you." Next day, the herdsman took his cows and drove them to the pastures. But, instead of grass, he made them eat the rice from the rice-fields, and then drove them home again. There, he got a stout bamboo and beat the poor cows, till they vomited all they had eaten. Then he picked up the grains of rice, and gave them to his mother, who dried them in the sun and cleaned them. After that, the herdsman went away to the high-road, and, pouring out a lot of water in one spot, made it so muddy and slippery that no one who passed there could keep his feet. He then hid himself behind some bushes, and waited. Presently, the milkmen began to pass

¹ Bengali, *daini*, Sk., *dākinī*, a sort of superhuman cannibal witch. The *dainis* are satellites of Kālī.

along, and one after another slipped his foot and fell, letting drop his milk-pots. The herdsman caught the milk as it flowed from the broken vessels, and soon had gathered a great deal, which he took home to his mother. In the same sort of way, he got as much sugar as he needed, and thus his mother was able to prepare cakes for him. The herdsman then ate up all the cakes but one, which he carried away and planted in the field where he grazed his cattle.

After a while, that cake sprang up and grew into a tree.² The tree became bigger and bigger, and blossomed, and at length bore cakes.³ Thus the herdsman had as many cakes to eat as he liked.

One day, a witch happened to pass through that meadow, and was greatly surprised when she saw fine cakes growing on a tree. She came near to look, and, seeing the herdsman there, she said, "Herdsman, will you give me a cake?" He answered, "What have you got to put it in?" The old witch said, "Give it me in my hand." The herdsman answered, "It will burn your hand." For, of course, the cakes on the tree were piping hot. Then she said, "I'll take it in my mouth." The herdsman answered, "But it will burn your mouth." "Well, put it into my wallet," she said. "Take one, yourself," he replied. "No, you give it," she said. The herds-

² For some other cases of unlikely planting, see GHT, I, p. 333; II, p. 301; RRT, pp. 183 f.; LDB, p. 145. In all these, miraculous results are obtained. But the cultivator who sows roasted sesame seed, in the hope of getting a roasted crop, has less luck than our hero, his sole harvest being the derision of his neighbours—KSS, II, p. 44.

³ Cf. the conveniences of the 'Land of Cockaigne.' See No. XVII, Note 3.

man was about to do so, but, as he was going towards her with the cake, suddenly the old woman gripped him by the neck, and shoved him into her wallet.⁴ He cried out : “ What do you mean by shoving me into your bag ? ” The witch answered, “ It’s an age since I’ve had flesh to eat, that’s why I’m carrying you off.” Hearing this, the herdsman remained quiet inside the wallet.

After she had walked a long way, the witch began to feel very thirsty. So she set down her wallet, and went off some distance to a tank to take a drink. Meanwhile, some other herdsman chanced to come along that road. Seeing a wallet lying in the middle of the path, they untied the mouth of it, for they were curious to know what might be inside. As soon as the wallet was opened, the man within cried out, “ Brothers, save me.” They at once pulled him out, and, putting in a lot of bricks and tiles instead, tied up the wallet and set it down in the middle of the road just as they had found it. Then they ran off as fast as ever they could. Presently, the witch, having quenched her thirst, came back, and, lifting up the wallet upon her shoulder, trudged away home.

When she arrived, she called to her children and said, “ Look, all of you, what a fine prey I’ve brought home to-day ! ” They all crowded round her while she opened the mouth of the wallet. But, when it was opened, nobody was to be seen ; only some bits of brick and tile. Seeing these, her children were

⁴ Similarly, in ‘ Ivan Buikovich,’ the witch takes the opportunity of seizing the hero’s hand when he offers her a ducat—RRT, p. 72. Why it should be necessary for her to get a chance of this particular kind, is difficult to guess.

furious, and abused the old woman to their hearts' content. What could she say? Vowing vengeance in her heart on the herdsmen, she declared to them, "If I don't break his neck and eat him to-morrow, then you're welcome to believe my story's all a lie."⁵ But it was too late to go back again for him that day, so she had to put off her journey till morning. As soon as it was light, she set off for the meadow where she had seized him the day before. When she got there, she saw the herdsman sitting at the foot of the cake-tree. He looked up and said: "Oh, you're here again, are you?" She answered, "You needn't be afraid: I won't do you any harm. All I want is another cake." The herdsman said, "I won't give you another cake." The old woman begged very hard, calling him, "My Lōqhī, my golden moon."⁶ "Do give me another," she said again and again. At length, he was moved by her piteous entreaties. He picked a cake, and was in the act of taking it to her, when, suddenly, she again gripped him by the neck, shoved him into her wallet, and, fastening it up firmly, walked straight away home without ever once stopping. When she arrived, she cried, "Come, children, see what I've brought this time." They all came running, and were overjoyed at seeing the herdsman. Some time after, before the old woman went out to beg one day, she said to her daughter-in-law, "To-day, kill him and cut him up, and make him ready for us."

Then she and her other children went away, each one to his or her own daily work. Nobody was left

⁵ Cf. KSS, I, p. 25, with Note, and pp. 263 f., with Note on 263.

⁶ Common expressions of endearment in Bengali.

in the house but her daughter-in-law and the herdsman. The girl said to him, "Herdsman, you must die to-day. But, before I kill you, I should like you to tell me how it is your teeth are so beautiful." The herdsman answered, "Very well, I can tell you, and, if you like, I can make yours more beautiful still." She eagerly asked what he would need to do this. The herdsman said, "Nothing out of the way—only a kettleful of oil and a skein of flax." She answered, "These I can get at once, but will you be able to have my teeth done before my husband comes back?" He said, "I can do it all in a minute or two." Hearing this, she quickly brought the kettle of oil and the skein of flax. The herdsman put the kettle of oil on the fire, and, after it had become very hot, he said to the girl: "Lie you down there and put the flax over your teeth." She lay down and did so. Then the herdsman took up the kettle and poured the boiling oil upon her mouth. Thereupon, she threw her limbs wildly about for a little, and was dead in a few moments. When he saw she was dead, the herdsman stripped off her clothes and ornaments, and put them on himself. Then he cut the girl in pieces and cooked her, and served her up all ready. Presently, the witch and her children all came home. The old woman said, "Well, daughter, is everything ready?" The herdsman answered, "Hum," not daring to speak plainly. Then they all sat down and ate, but the herdsman took up a water-pot to go to the river, as if wishing to wash his clothes. The witch called out, "Wait a little, and I shall go with you." So, finishing her dinner, she got up and went along with her daughter-in-law, as she thought. When they came to

the river, the daughter-in-law jumped in, and swam about till she was a good way off. The old woman began to cry, "Come back, daughter, night is coming on." Hearing this, the herdsman called back as loudly as he could, "What daughter are you talking about? I've fed you with your daughter-in-law, you old witch; and I've got off safe and sound." ⁷

[The latter part of the herdsman's answer, which, literally translated, runs thus, "I've given you your daughter-in-law to eat and shown you my plantain," is a current proverb. The saying is used in the sense of hoisting a man with his own petard, and getting off scot-free, oneself. Similarly, there is another saying, "I'll get you into a pretty fix, and you shall eat my plantain," meaning, "I'll do what harm I like to you, but you will be able to do none to me." A way of being contemptuously impudent is to hold out the thumb towards a person, this being the action described as "showing him a plantain."]

⁷ Similarly, in the story of 'The Beardless One and the Drakos,' the former fools the latter into letting himself be boiled, by pretending he will dye him the same colour as himself, and so make him immortal—HGA, I, p. 155. Analogous cases of fooling will be found, *ib.*, I, p. 77; GOS, I, p. 101; RRT, p. 148; CLER, p. 570; GHT, I, p. 224; CAS, pp. 12 ff.; CLP, I, p. 139. With the 'dinner,' cf. RRT, p. 165, and KSS, I, p. 162. For references to many other variants of this story, see RRT, Note on p. 168.

XXII.

THE RAJA'S SON AND THE KOTWAL'S¹ SON.

ONCE upon a time, there lived a Raja's son and a Kotwal's son who were great friends. They stayed together, and sat together, and, in truth, were quite devoted to one another. One day, the Kotwal's son said to the Prince, "Come, brother Prince, let us go and visit our fathers-in-law." The other replied, "Most willingly." Then the Kotwal's son said again, "Let us both go to the house of each of our fathers-in-law, and introduce one another." "Very well," replied the Prince. "Let us start at once, then," said the Kotwal's son, "and, first, let us go to my father-in-law's." "Certainly, there's no harm in that," answered the Prince. Forthwith they took leave of their parents, and started to pay their visits.

As agreed, they went first to the house of the father-in-law of the Kotwal's son. When they arrived there, the Kotwal's son went straight into the house, while the Prince stood waiting outside. His father-in-law was overjoyed at seeing the Kotwal's son, and welcomed him most heartily. Then the young man said to the people of the house, "Outside there I have a servant ;² let some little attention be

¹ More usually, the Chief Minister's son is the Prince's bosom-friend. See No. XX, Note 1, and No. XXVI, Note 1.

² Such treachery is rare.

paid to him." The Prince was near enough to hear what he said. Thereupon he said, "I'm rightly served for my folly in doing as I have done. However, I'll wait and see what more is fated to befall me."

Some time after, it happened that there was no grass for the Kotwal's son's horse. When this was told him, the Kotwal's son said: "Put a sickle into the hands of that man of mine there, and let him cut some grass and fetch it to the horse." The people of the house did as he said; a sickle was put into the Prince's hands, and he was bidden go and cut grass. The Prince took the sickle, thinking, "What am I to do now?" But he could not help himself, so he set off to cut the grass. He had not been long at work before he cut his finger so badly that it streamed with blood. The Prince began to weep bitterly. Just at this moment, Bhagavatī and Śiva happened to pass along that road. Bhagavatī said, "Thākur, let us see who that is that's weeping there." Mahādeva answered, "This is always the way with you. You can't walk along a road without asking questions without end. Who is weeping? Why is he weeping? and so forth—all such things have continually to be explained to you. Come on, never mind that just now." "No, no," said Bhagavatī, "you must tell me." What could Mahādeva do?³ There was nothing for it but to tell her the whole story. Then she said, "Let us go to the Prince." "Very well," answered Mahādeva, "come along." With these words, they both walked up to the Prince, and

³ Hindu story-tellers seem to delight in representing Durgā as both able and willing to give her husband "beans," if he shows any lack of promptitude in meeting her wishes. Cf. KSS, I, p. 4.

Bhagavatī asked him, "Who are you?" The Prince at once told her all about himself. Then the goddess said, "Don't be afraid. Touch with your hand the finger that has been cut and say :

'Tis Śiv⁴ and Durgā's order. Quick
And firmly, both together stick."

The Prince did so, and, forthwith, his finger was completely healed. He then sang praises to the god and goddess, while they, after granting him the boon,⁵ departed on their way. Having finished cutting, the Prince lifted up the bundle of grass upon his head and returned to the house.

Many days passed, and still the toils and sufferings of the Prince were as great and painful as ever. Accordingly, he said to himself one day, "I'll teach these people a lesson." The night following, when the Kotwal's son and his wife went to their own room, he took his stand in a secret place so as to be able to watch them. The Kotwal's son took up his hookah, and was just beginning to smoke. At that very moment, the Prince said :

"'Tis Śiv and Durgā's order. Quick
And firmly, both together stick."

Immediately, the Kotwal's son's mouth became inseparably joined to the mouthpiece of the hookah. Then his wife went to take the hookah from him, but, just as her fingers clasped the wooden stem, the Prince again repeated the spell :

"'Tis Śiv and Durgā's order. Quick
And firmly, both together stick."

⁴ Śiva is pronounced as a monosyllable in Bengali—Sheeb.

⁵ *Viz.*, the above *Mantra*—see MWR, pp. 197 ff.—which he, of course, understood would be efficacious for all kinds of purposes.

In an instant, her fingers and the hookah stem were securely fastened together. She now called for help to the whole household, and everybody came running to the room. They all began to make great efforts to pull the hookah away. But, as soon as anybody touched it, the Prince recited the charm, and hands and hookah were at once glued together.⁶ They were all now in a terrible fix. They didn't know what to do. At length the master of the house said, "Let somebody go and tell the family-priest what has happened." But almost everyone but the Prince was fastened to the hookah; so he had to be sent with the message.

He was not long in reaching the priest, and told him that the master of the house wished him to come as quick as ever he could. The priest started up in a great hurry. His wife said, "I will come too." "How in the world can you come at this time of night?" he answered. But she said, "I'm sure that some merriment must be going on at the master's house. That's why you have been sent for; so I'll not stay here alone, let me tell you." In this way, his wife kept urging the priest for leave to accompany him, until, at length, he said, "Well, come along, then." They dismissed the messenger, and, forthwith, started, themselves. It chanced that, at one place, a little stream flowed across the road. When they came to this stream, the priest's wife said to him, "At this time of night, it's quite impossible for me to cross on foot." Now the Prince had waited for them there, and was sitting by the side of the stream.

⁶ Cf. the way in which seven people, including the parson and the sexton, stick to Dummling's Golden Goose—GHT, I, pp. 275 f.

Hearing the woman speak, he said to the priest, "Venerable sir, take up my venerable mother on your shoulders and so carry her over. The water here is very shallow." "That is a very good idea," said the priest's wife to her husband. "I'll get upon your back, and you'll take me across to the other side and set me down there." What could the poor Brahman do? Seeing no help for it, he took his wife upon his back, and waded with her through the stream to the other side. But, while he was doing so, before he had got across, the Prince took care to repeat the spell again:

" 'Tis Śiv and Durgā's order. Quick
And firmly, both together stick."

The Brahman, having reached the bank, told his wife to get down, but she couldn't. As often as he said, "Get down, get down," she answered, "I can't get down; I tell you, I can't get down." Here was another terrible fix. At last the Brahman, with his wife on his back, had to trudge on to his master's house. When he arrived there, the people of the house, seeing the plight he was in, all began to laugh. They asked him, "Venerable sir, why have you our venerable mother on your back?" The Brahman answered angrily, "How should I know? I never saw such a disobedient and unmanageable woman." Then they said, "Venerable mother, come down." She answered, "I can't come down." Hearing this, they said, "You're in the very same plight as ourselves. What was the good of our sending for you? The exorcist we sent for to drive out the devils, turns out to be possessed, himself.⁷ Where can we go for help now?"

⁷ "The *Ojha* is possessed by a *Bhūt*," is a common Bengali proverb,

Hereupon they all began to ask, "Where is that servant?" The priest said, "It was he who came to call me." Hearing this, the master of the house ordered him to be brought at once. He soon appeared, and the master said to him, "Tell us what you know about this affair." He answered, "I'm only a servant, what should I know?" But the master continued to urge and entreat him, till, at length, he said, "It is by your own son-in-law's fault that all this has happened. This is what has come of his making me cut grass for his horse." Then, taking pity upon them, the Prince recited this charm:

"'Tis Śiv and Durgā's order, ye
That fast were bound, now loosened be."⁸

As soon as he had spoken, they were all set free in a moment. And, now that the master of the house knew who the Prince was, he showed him all possible respect and attention, and begged him to pardon his having neglected him before. Soon after, the Prince returned home to his parents.

⁸ Mention of the receiving of this counter-charm from the goddess has been inadvertently omitted by the narrator. Excogitated by the Prince himself, it would have had no efficacy. The virtue of a *Mantra* seems to be something superadded to the—often, meaningless—sounds of which it is composed, and may, in process of time, become dormant. Hence the need of the elaborate process of *puraścharaṇa*, which a learned Tantrik explained to me as aiming at the "wakening up" of the *Mantra*.

XXIII.

TILBHUSHKI AND CHALBHUSHKI, OR THE TWO BRIDES.

ONCE on a time, in a certain village, there lived a very wealthy Brahman land-owner, who was greatly respected by all the people of the neighbourhood. He had two wives ; for, his first having borne him no children, he had married a second.¹ The younger wife was an amiable woman, and devotedly attached to her husband, but the elder was a terror—a perfect embodiment of quarrelsomeness and malice—and she hated her husband bitterly. He, for his part, loved the younger of the two, and heartily detested the other, though he was prudent enough to make a great show of affection for her, and, in order to prevent his household from going to wreck, did all in his power to keep the peace between the two ladies.

One day, a devotee came to the house to ask for alms. The younger wife, seeing him approaching, went to the door with rice and other things for him. Before accepting them, he asked, “ Mother, have you any children ? ” “ Thākur,” she answered, “ I am

¹ In the hope of obtaining a son who would celebrate his *Srāddha* after his death for the well-being of his soul. See MWR, p. 355. In Bengali novels of modern life, when any of the characters is represented as marrying again during the lifetime of his first wife, it is usually for this reason that the step is said to be taken.

very unfortunate. Bhögöban has give me not even a single child." "Then I can't take your alms," mother," said he. "The hand of a childless wife is unholy. To accept alms from her hand would bring about my fall from the state I've attained to by my austerities. Moreover, such a woman can never go to heaven." At these words, the poor woman began to weep bitterly, and, going to her husband, she said, "I can't endure to live any longer." "Why, what's wrong?" he asked. "Has anybody insulted you?" Tell me who it is, and I'll make him smart for it." "No, no," said she. "It's nothing of that sort. But a devotee came to our door, and I went to give him alms. He refused to take anything from my hand, saying it was a sin to accept alms from the hand of a childless wife—he would lose all the fruit of his penance, if he did so. Besides, he said that it's impossible for such a woman to go to heaven. So, what's the good of my living any longer?" Hearing all this, the husband was greatly distressed. He said, "It's not right to grieve about a matter in which man is powerless, and all depends on God's will. However, I will get every kind of appropriate rite performed. Perhaps that will move God to be gracious to us."

Some time passed. One day, when the gentleman was sitting in his verandah, the same devotee appeared again. When he saw him coming, the Zemindar at once got up from his seat, and received him with

² Cf. LDB, p. 1. See, also, CLER, Note on p. 412.

³ Hindu sensitiveness to insult is exceedingly keen. Cf. No. XX, Note 6.

the utmost respect. The devotee gave him his blessing, and, seating himself, said, "Mōhāshoy, I've heard that you have no children. I was very sorry to learn that, and have, therefore, brought you a drug, which you must make your wives take. Its effect will be that children will be born to you." ' The Zemindar took the drug, and thanked the devotee again and again most warmly for his gift. The latter once more gave him his blessing, and took his departure.

The elder wife had been in a room close by all the time, and had seen and heard everything that passed between the devotee and her husband. Now, she came to the latter and said, "Give me the drug, and I will eat it." "It is not for you alone, but for both of you. You must share it between you," was the reply. "Very good," said she. With these words, she went off with the drug, pounded it in a mortar, and ate up the whole of it. Presently, the younger wife came and said, "Sister, where is the drug? I wish to eat my share of it." "I'm sorry there's none left," was the reply. "I had eaten the whole before I was aware of it." "What?" said the younger wife. "Didn't the devotee say most expressly that we were to share it? How could you eat it all by mistake?" "What good will talking do you?" answered the other. "I've eaten it all, and there's an end of the matter. Where am I to get any more for you?" Thus cruelly disappointed, the younger wife began to weep bitterly. However, as a last resource, she went and rinsed the pestle

⁴ On the subject of magical cures for barrenness, see Appendix, Note 6,

and mortar that had been used to pound up the drug, and drank off the water.⁵

Very soon after, she became pregnant, and, a little later, the same happy lot befel the elder wife also. The old Zemindar was overjoyed at the prospect of being blest with children, and spent money lavishly on all the celebrations customary at such a time.⁶ In due course, both wives gave birth to daughters. The younger wife's was a most lovely child, the elder's was an uglier brat than anybody had ever seen! The father, outwardly, displayed the same joyful affection for both, but other people, while they all loved the former, and were eager to get her to hold in their arms, simply couldn't bear to look at her sister, much less to fondle her. As the girls grew up, the heart of the elder wife was like to burst with spite, and night and day she thought of nothing but how she might destroy her rival's child.⁷ When the girls reached marriageable age, the difference between them was more striking than ever: the one fairly brimmed over with beauty, the other, with

⁵ Similarly, in 'The Monkey-Prince,' six of the Raja's seven wives eat up all the seven mangoes procured with the Fakir's help, and the youngest has to content herself with one of the thrown-away stones. Hence, she bears a son covered with a monkey's skin—SIF, p. 42. Cf. KSS, I, p. 320 and p. 382.

⁶ See MWR, pp. 355 ff.

⁷ The daughters of two co-wives of Indian tales appear usually in Western stories as the daughter of a deceased wife and the daughter or daughters of her stepmother. The former is beautiful and good, and is maltreated and plotted against by the stepmother and her bad and ugly daughter or daughters. The stories that ring the changes upon this *motif* in Western collections are countless. Their Indian counterparts are not quite so common. See MCF, Index, references under 'Cinderella.'

hideousness. From all the great families of the country round about, matchmakers came with proposals of marriage for Tilbhushki—as the former was called—but a youth fit to stand beside her was nowhere to be found. But as for Chalbushki—so the other was called—nobody ever thought of mentioning her name in connection with marriage. She was universally detested, and with good reason, for her heart was as evil as her face was hideous. All the neighbours were glad when Tilbhushki went to visit them, but, when they saw Chalbushki coming, they caught up their brooms, and, crying, “Be off! Be off!” they chased her away.

One day, the son of the Raja of that country came to hunt in the neighbouring forest. In the course of the day, eagerly following one wild beast after another, he got separated from his retinue, and, when evening fell, he found himself quite alone. Darkness was coming on, and, even in daylight, it would have been impossible for him to retrace his steps, as he had been too preoccupied to note by what way he came to the spot where he was now. Besides, he was hungry and thirsty and worn out with a whole day’s hunting. Quite at a loss in what direction to go, he resolved to ride straight forward, in the hope of coming upon some village. So, mounting again, he urged on his weary horse, and presently found himself approaching a number of houses. They belonged to Tilbhushki’s father’s village. Riding into it, the Prince drew rein before what seemed to be the Zemindar’s house. The master came out, and, learning who the stranger was, welcomed him with great cordiality and respect. The Prince was regaled

with a sumptuous meal, and then shown to a splendidly furnished room, where he passed the night.

In the morning, when he rose and left his room, he happened to get a sight of Tilbhushki, and at once was completely fascinated by her beauty. He was, himself, handsome enough to be no unsuitable match for her. "Mōhāshoy, whose daughter is that?" he inquired of his host. "Mine," was the reply. "Is she married?" asked the Prince. "No," answered her father. "Then, if you will give your consent," said the young man with great eagerness, "I will marry her." "No greater good fortune could befall me," was the reply. "You are a Prince; you will one day be Raja; while I am only a petty Zemindar. What could be a higher honour for me than that you should marry my daughter?"⁸

Preparations were at once made, and the marriage of Tilbhushki with the Prince was celebrated with all possible splendour. Both were overjoyed at having obtained partners who were all that their hearts could desire. The Prince, a few days later, took leave of his father-in-law, and, accompanied by his bride, returned to the chief city of the kingdom.

The Zemindar's elder wife now felt like bursting with spite and jealousy, so much so that she couldn't bring herself to stay on in her home any longer. She said to her husband, "I can't bear to live in your house another day. My daughter and I will go and

⁸ Cf. No. VIII, p. 82. Quite contrary to Hindu social law; see Manu, X, 11, 17, 24, 27. Cf. the uneasiness of Dushyanta, in 'Śakuntalā,' till he learns that S. is not the daughter of the hermit—a Brahman—but of the Kshatriya, Viśvāmitra, and a celestial nymph.

take up our abode somewhere else." Her husband was utterly disgusted with her, and was only too glad to let her have her way. She got a little house built for herself by the roadside, at some distance from the village, and there she and her daughter lived together by themselves.

After a time, Tilbhushki, according to custom, was sent by her father-in-law to pay a visit to her old home. She spent a few days there, and then set out on her return to her father-in-law's. As her palki was passing her father's elder wife's cottage, the latter came running out, and called to her, "Wait a minute, and let us see what ornaments you have got at your father-in-law's." Tilbhushki at once told her bearers to set down the palki, and, getting out of it, followed her stepmother into her cottage. The old woman then, pretending she wished to examine them thoroughly, began to take off all Tilbhushki's ornaments, and, while doing so, seized the opportunity of fastening a certain kind of root in her hair. This root had the effect of instantaneously changing the girl into a bird,⁹ which at once flew away. The stepmother then rigged out her own daughter with Tilbhushki's beautiful dress and ornaments, and made her get into the palki, which the bearers took up, and started off again.¹⁰

⁹ Cf. the charms sewn by the stepmother inside the silk shirts, which changed the princes into swans—GHT, I, p. 193. See Note 16.

¹⁰ Similarly, the first Râñi gets the loan of Surya Bai's jewels, and then pushes her into a tank—FOD, p. 94. The Muchie-Râñi's step-sister does the same to her, and tries to take her place—*ib.*, pp. 243 ff. In 'The Goose-Girl,' the waiting-maid takes the Princess's clothes and supplants her—GHT, II, pp. 12 ff. For other instances of the 'Substituted Bride,' see Appendix, Note 7.

Evening had fallen when they reached the palace. Chalbhushki at once repaired to the Prince's room. He, overjoyed at seeing his wife back again after what seemed to him a long absence, embraced her fervently, and then sat down with her upon his knees, clasping his arms round her. Now, the bird into which Tilbhushki had been transformed, was sitting on the branch of a tree, overhanging the window. Seeing what was taking place inside, it uttered these words :

“Tilbhushki's sitting on the tree ;
Chalbhushki's on the Prince's knee ;
Of sense he can't have got a scrap,
Whose sist'r-in-law sits in his lap.”¹¹

The Prince felt himself strangely affected by the sight of the bird. This unaccountable feeling, and the words the bird spoke, awakened in his mind the suspicion that, perhaps, it really was not Tilbhushki who was sitting with him. He had never yet had the opportunity of closely scanning his wife's features.¹² He knew only this much, that she was very beautiful. He now took a good look at the face of the woman beside him, and, though it was almost dark, was able to make out that she was very far

¹¹ Cf., in 'The Pomegranate King,' the questions asked by Gulianár Rāñi in the form of a bird, ending with the exclamation, "What a fool your Maharaja is!"—SIF, p. 12. See, also, GHT, I, pp. 98 f., and II, pp. 49 f.

¹² A state of things—like much else in these tales—not to be accounted for by Hindu customs, present or recorded, indicating that the story must have originated in a prehistoric community, where the rule that the bridegroom must not see the bride till some time after the marriage—perhaps, till after the birth of the first child—was still in force. See MCF, pp. 26 and 336 ; Lang's *Introd. to GHT*, pp. LXXIV f., Note *q*.

from beautiful. He set her down, and, without saying anything to anybody, went out, and, hastening to the foot of the tree, tried to catch the bird. But it kept hopping about from branch to branch, all the time repeating the same verse over and over again, and then suddenly flew away. The Prince completely lost his wits with grief and disappointment, and continued wandering round and round the tree, constantly repeating the lines :

“Tilbhushki's sitting on the tree ;
Chalbhushki's on the Prince's knee ;
Of sense he can't have got a scrap,
Whose sist'r-in-law sits in his lap.”¹³

The Raja was soon informed about the strange behaviour of the Prince, who was his only son, and, in great concern, hurried to the spot. He tried to find out what was wrong, but, in answer to all questions, the Prince simply repeated the same verse. By the Raja's orders, he was led away to his own room, and the best physicians in the kingdom were summoned to attend him. But none of the kinds of treatment they tried, did him any good. Famous physicians from the neighbouring kingdoms were next called in. But nothing they could do, was of any avail. The Prince was visibly wasting away, and the old Raja was overwhelmed with grief.

One day, a fowler came to the palace with a bird, which he offered for sale. It had the remarkable quality of being able to talk like a human being. Hearing of this, the Raja ordered the man to be

¹³ So, in ‘Phakir Chand,’ when the Princess disappears in the tank, the Prince, who has seen her, goes mad with love, and keeps constantly muttering, “Now here, now gone !”—LDB, p. 24. Cf. *ib.*, p. 91, and SIF, p. 74.

brought before him, and asked him what price he wanted for the bird. He asked a hundred gold mohurs.¹⁴ The Raja at once paid him the money, and told his servants to take the bird to the Prince's room, thinking it might perhaps divert his mind from the sad thoughts which had overwhelmed him. But the only change produced was that, now, the Prince sat gazing at the bird, and wept incessantly. At last, one day, the bird suddenly managed to break the chain which bound it to its perch, and flew down into his lap.¹⁵ He began to stroke it gently. As he did so, he felt his hand come in contact with something hard. Scarcely knowing what he was doing, he pulled at the thing with his fingers. It was the root which her stepmother had fixed in Tilbhushki's hair. As the Prince kept on pulling, all at once its fastening gave way, and, in a moment, Tilbhushki regained her original form.¹⁶ The Prince soon recovered his wits and his health, when he

¹⁴ A now obsolete coin which was the equivalent of sixteen rupees when the rupee was worth two shillings. In LDB, p. 210, the fowler asks Rs. 10,000 for the *hiraman* bird.

¹⁵ So, the lotus into which the Bel-Princess has been changed, and the fruit that contains her, elude everybody else's grasp, but come to the hand of the Prince himself—SIF, p. 145. Cf. the "Upel" flower—CAS, p. 108.

¹⁶ Cases of transformation—or death—being caused by the affixing or insertion of some object, and of re-transformation—or resuscitation—ensuing upon its dislodgment, are very common. God (!) puts a pin in the head of the Gulianār Rāñī, which changes her into a bird. The bird is caught by a fisherman for her husband. As he handles it, he feels something sticking in its head, pulls it out, and his wife stands before him—SIF, pp. 12 ff. A Rākshasa's finger-nail pierces Surya Bai's hand, and she dies instantly. When it is extracted, she comes to life again—FOD, p. 92. The 'Fair Lady with the Seven Veils' becomes a white dove when the slave-

saw his lost wife beside him once more. Tilbhushki now related all that had happened to her, and so enraged was her father-in-law when he learned how she had been treated and how his son had been deceived, that he caused Chalbushki to be cut into little pieces, which he sent as a present to her father, at the same time informing him fully about everything that had taken place. The Zemindar, when he came to know all, was as angry as the Raja had been. Sending at once for his elder wife, he showed her the pieces of her daughter's body, and said, "There is the fruit of your wickedness." He then had her put to death by being cut into little bits like her daughter.

The old Raja soon after this made over his kingdom to his son, who lived and reigned long and happily with his beautiful and beloved wife, Tilbhushki.

girl, who designs to supplant her, thrusts a needle into her head. On the King's removing it, she regains her proper form—GOS, I, pp. 82 ff. Cf. SIF, pp. 245 ff., with Note 6 on p. 253; KSS, II, pp. 156 f. and 302, with Note; KKT, pp. 71 and 74; CLER, pp. 347 f. and 545; GHT, I, pp. 212 ff.; GOS, I, pp. 6 f., 11 f., and 18 f.; HSF, p. 247; CLP, I, p. 444, Note. See, also, MCF, p. 155.

XXIV.

THE TWO BRIDEGROOMS.

IN Raja Vikramāditya's ¹ hall of audience lived a Parrot,² of which he was very fond and took the greatest care. This bird was able to give true information about everything, past, present, and future, and the Raja never undertook business of any importance without consulting it. Practically, it was his Chief Minister.

One day, the Raja was sitting in his darbār, with the Parrot beside his throne. There being for the moment nothing else to do, he asked the Parrot, "What is Bhānumatī Rānī doing just now in her

¹ The famous King of Oujein—Sk., *Ujjayini*—after whom the Samvat era, which begins 79 B.C., is named. Little that is historical is known of him, but his position in Eastern legend and romance is not unlike that of Solomon or Hārūn-ar-Rashīd. See No. XXV, Note 2, and 'Sagas from the Far East,' pp. 230 ff.

² The parrot is a very distinguished bird in Indian Folk-tales. It is the narrator of the 'Śuka-Saptati'—'Seventy Tales of a Parrot'—and, in KSS, II, pp. 18 f. and 25 f., we meet with one which knows the four Vedas, and all the sciences and graceful arts. It had been a Vidyādhara—semi-divine being—in a previous birth. Cf. FOD, pp. 111 ff. and 145; KKT, pp. 65, 312 ff., 320, and 450 ff., with Note on 450; LDB, pp. 155 ff.—same story in KKT, pp. 35 f.—LDB, pp. 209 ff.—story of the *hīraman*—and 'Sagas from the Far East,' references under "Parrots" in Index. With the omniscience of our parrot, cf. that of the Lion-King in 'The Twelve Huntsmen'—GHT, I, pp. 284 ff.

own apartments ? ” “ She’s making a garland,” was the reply. “ What’s the garland for ? ” inquired the Raja. “ Oh,” said the Parrot, “ her youngest sister’ll be married to-night. So she’s making the garland as a present for the bridegroom.” “ What nonsense is that you’re talking ? ” replied the Raja. “ Bhānumatī is here. Her home is Raja Bhoja’s country, on the other side of seven oceans and thirteen rivers.⁴ How in the world is she to get there in time to present a garland to her brother-in-law to-night ? Besides, she’s said nothing to me about this.” “ Your Majesty,” said the Parrot, “ all that’s easily enough explained. Bhānumatī hasn’t told you, for she was afraid that, if you knew, you wouldn’t let her go. As for her getting there, she’ll have no difficulty about that. This evening, two witches will bring a certain tree from Raja Bhoja’s country. Bhānumatī will seat herself in that tree, and it will take her to her father’s palace and bring her back here, all in one night.”

³ The best known King of this name is Bhoja-deva, Raja of Dhār, who flourished, probably, in the eleventh century A.D., and possessed a famous library. If he is meant here, then the anachronism in making him contemporary with Vikramāditya stretches even Folk-tale licence. King Bhoja is one of the friends Harichand visits after his punishment begins—SIF, p. 228. He gives its name to the Mongolian form of the ‘ Siñhāsana-Dvātriñśati ’—the thirty-two tales related by Vikramāditya’s throne—*Ardshī Bordshī* being a corruption of *Rājā Bhoja*. See, also, ‘ Sagas from the Far East,’ pp. 393 ff.

⁴ This expression strictly signifies beyond the bounds of earth altogether—as in No. XXVII—but, here, it means simply a considerable distance—say, a good many days’ journey off. Bengalis use the phrase constantly in speaking of the journey between England and India. Cf. the “ thrice-nine lands ” which the eagle flies over, in ‘ The Water-King and Vasilissa the Wise ’—RRT, p. 122.

The Raja was greatly astonished. At the same time, he was very grateful to the Parrot for the information it had given him. Stroking its feathers affectionately, he broke up the assembly, and retired, himself, to the Ráñí's apartments, much earlier than usual. Thus he entered Bhánumatí's room before he was expected, and in time to see that she was, indeed, twining a wreath, although she put it away out of sight as quickly as she could. He allowed her to suppose he hadn't seen what she was doing, and said, "Bhánumatí, I feel very much out of sorts and wish to go to bed at once." She hastened to make everything ready for him to lie down, and did all she could to relieve him by massaging his limbs and the like. As evening closed in, the Raja pretended to fall asleep. Presently, the witches arrived with the tree in the palace garden, and brought word to the Ráñí that it was there. Having satisfied herself that her husband was sleeping soundly, she went away to another room to put on her finest dress and ornaments. This gave the Raja the opportunity he was watching for. He rose at once, and, going out to the garden, climbed the tree and concealed himself where the branches were thickest. Her toilet finished, Bhánumatí took up the garland she had been making, and accompanied the two witches to the tree. The three seated themselves in it, the witches cracked their fingers thrice,⁵ and away it sped over the seven oceans and the thirteen rivers

⁵ Regarding such magical locomotion, see Appendix, Note 8, and MCF, p. 218. Cf., also, No. XXVII, Note 10, and LDB, p. 88—the Rākshasī maid-servant's boat moves off with the speed of lightning, when she snaps her fingers thrice and utters a spell.

to Raja Bhoja's country. Presently, it stopped beside a garden, and Bhánumatí, with the two witches, got down and went away into the palace.

Left alone in the tree, Vikramāditya thought to himself, "It's no use sitting here any longer. I'll have a look round." So he got down. Having nothing on but the shabby old cloth he had lain down to sleep in, he didn't care to go to any very public place, and made up his mind to walk about in the neighbourhood of the garden, which seemed quiet and retired. To lessen the chance of his being recognized by anybody, he began to rub dust upon his body. While he was doing this, he heard the sound of music not far off, and presently lights appeared. "There's the bridegroom coming," said he to himself. "I must keep out of sight." So he got behind a tree by the roadside, and went on rubbing dust on his body as quickly as he could.

The bridegroom's palki soon arrived at that spot. Now, this Prince was a hunchback. Moreover, he was afflicted with a nasty chronic ailment. Feeling very uneasy just at the time his palki reached the tree-foot, he made his bearers stop, and, getting out, went away alone to a place some distance from the road. His attendants sat down beneath the tree to await his return. Presently, one of them caught sight of Vikramāditya, as he stood behind the tree, rubbing dust upon himself. Thinking he must be a madman, he and his companions laid hold of him and took him away to the bridegroom's father. Out of mischievousness, they complained that he had been throwing dust upon them. The Raja was greatly struck by Vikramāditya's appearance,

and a bright idea occurred to him. Pretending to be very angry, he said, "What do you mean, you rascal, by throwing dust on my servants?" "I didn't throw dust on them," was the reply. "I was standing quietly behind the tree, minding my own business. That's all the fault I've committed." "Oh, don't tell me," said the Raja. "That sort of story won't go down. If you wish to escape being hanged as you deserve, you must do me a service I require." "As Your Majesty commands," replied Vikramāditya. "You've only to say what you wish." "Well, look here," said the Raja. "My son is hideously ugly, he's got a chronic disease, and, what's still worse, a huge hump on his back. If I take a creature like him to Raja Bhoja's court as a bridegroom for his daughter, God alone knows what the Raja may do. You see what a fix I'm in. Now, you're a very good-looking fellow. So, what you've got to do is this. Put on all this bridegroom's finery here, get into the palki, and, after you reach the palace, go through the ceremony of being married to the Princess.⁶ You will remain with her in the bridal chamber till the women and girls have done with their fun and leave you and her alone.⁷ Then you must come away, and my son will go in and take your place." "Very good, Your Majesty," said Vikramāditya, and the attendants at once rigged

⁶ Cf. KSS, II, pp. 602 f. and 609. An old Brahman substitutes the handsome Keśaṭa for his own son at the latter's marriage, the son being "the prince of ugly men," having "projecting teeth, a flat nose, squinting eyes, a big belly, crooked feet, and ears like winnowing baskets." The trick, however, succeeds no better than in Vikramāditya's case. Cf. CLER, pp. 487 ff., and RRT, pp. 107 ff.

⁷ On the night of a marriage, after the celebration of the cere-

him out in the bridegroom's grand clothes. He was a very handsome man, and, with the fine dress to set off his beauty, he presented an appearance which filled the Raja and his attendants with admiration. He got into the palki, and the procession moved on towards the palace. A few minutes later, the real bridegroom came back. Finding everybody gone, he walked on till he came to the palace. There, some of his father's attendants told him all about the arrangement that had been made. Seeing the wisdom of it at once, he raised no objection, and kept himself in the background till he should be wanted.

Meanwhile, Vikramāditya in bridegroom's attire had arrived in the darbār and taken his seat. All the bride's friends were charmed with his appearance. Bhānumatī herself—who did not recognize him—went so far as to declare that he was more handsome than even her own husband! Raja Bhoja gazed at him, and thought himself a most fortunate father to gain such a husband for his daughter. The auspicious moment having arrived, the marriage-ceremony was duly performed. The bride and bridegroom then retired to the bridal chamber in the women's quarters of the palace, and Bhānumatī affectionately presented the bridegroom with the garland she had made, laughed and joked with him, and, finally, pulled his ears! Vikramāditya, as may be believed, was inwardly very much amused. After a while, she and her companions came away, and the bride and bridegroom were left alone. Vikramā-

mony, the bride and bridegroom go to a chamber, and there the former is bantered and made fun of for an hour or two by a crowd of women and girls. This is a regular part of the proceedings.

ditya then said, "Look here, Princess. I'm not your husband. Your husband is an ugly, sickly hunchback. Finding me by the roadside, his people made me agree to come with them and play the part of bridegroom thus far. Now I must go, and the real bridegroom will come to you. So, good-bye." "What?" said the Princess. "Was it not to you I was married? You are my husband. I'll have no other!" "I'm bound by my promise," was the reply. "I positively must go now, and he must come in." "I'll never let him come in!" cried the Princess. "What do you take me for, that you suppose, after being married to you, I shall consent to live with somebody else? If you insist on abandoning me, I will cut my own throat. To think that I should have to give up a husband like you and take an ugly hunchback instead! Shame upon me, if I do!" Seeing the Princess was quite determined, Vikramāditya said, "Well, then, there's only one thing we can do. Go I must, and that, immediately. But give me your ring and keep mine.⁸ It may be, if Vidhātā⁹ is gracious, we shall meet again." Ac-

⁸ Similarly, Bearskin divides a ring, and writes his name on the half he gives the princess, and hers on the one he keeps, as a means of future mutual identification—GHT, II, pp. 68 f. Cf. *ib.*, II, pp. 104 and 106; LDB, p. 136; KKT, p. 108, with Note, and p. 122; CLER, p. 267. See also Note 13.

⁹ Vidhātā Purusha is the god of Fate, to whom is popularly ascribed that predestination of the events of each individual's life which Hindu philosophy and theology regard as *Karmaphala*, viz., the consequences of the person's actions in a previous birth, which their own inherent power works out. Vidhātā is supposed to write a summary of the child's future destinies on its forehead, on the sixth day after its birth. Hence, "What is written on the forehead," or simply, "Forehead"—Sk., *Kapāla*, Beng., *Kōpāl*—

cordingly, they exchanged rings, and Vikramāditya came away.

As had been previously arranged, the real bridegroom was standing at the back of the door. The moment Vikramāditya left, he came in. Instantly, the Princess fell upon him with a stout stick, beat him soundly, shoved him out, and bolted the door. He began shrieking and howling for all he was worth, and the racket he made, soon brought his father with his attendants rushing to the spot. "What has happened? What has happened?" they cried in great excitement and alarm. "The Princess beat me cruelly with a stick and flung me out of the room," replied the hunchback. His father manifested the utmost horror and amazement. "What an unheard-of outrage!" he cried. "What sort of a witches' country is this we've come to? What sort of a wife is this I've got for my son? What an enormity! To think of her actually using a stick—a wife taking a stick to her husband! And she's quite spoilt my golden moon's beauty."¹⁰ He's not

are the commonest expressions for one's fate. Ask a Bengali how he has fallen into some misfortune. He answers in a word, "Kōpāl!" So, in the story of 'Hatim Tai and the Lady,' she says, "The destiny of every individual is traced out on his forehead by the hand of Divine Providence"—CLER, pp. 49 f. Strictly speaking, Vidhātā hasn't it in his power to be gracious. He is absolutely bound by what he has once written, and that, of course, in the last resort, is determined by Karma. See Nos. I, II, and IV, Note 6, LDB, pp. 9 ff., and Appendix, Note 1.

¹⁰ With the attempt to lay the blame of the husband's ugliness and deformity upon the wife, cf. the cases in which an unfaithful wife, who has lost her nose in the pursuit of pleasure, tries to make out that she has been wantonly mutilated by her husband. *E.g.*, KSS, II, pp. 249 f. and 617 f., with Note on p. 250, where many references are given.

fit to be seen now. But what in all the world is this ? A hump on his back ! This crowns all !¹¹ The infernal jade !” So he raged on ; his attendants followed suit, and the uproar grew louder and louder. It awoke Raja Bhoja himself, and he rose, wondering what on earth was up, and hurried away in the direction of the noise. By this time, all the women in the palace had gathered at the bridal-chamber door. The old Raja was distressed beyond measure when he was informed of his daughter’s misconduct. “ What’s this you’ve been up to ? ” he called to her angrily. “ Where did you learn behaviour of this sort ? ” Her mother, too, began to scold her most severely, and all the other women chimed in. The Princess saw it wouldn’t do to keep silence any longer. She opened her door and came out. “ That’s not my husband,” said she, pointing with an expression of disgust to the hunchback. “ The man I was married to, left my room during the night, some time since.” This declaration produced a new uproar. The Princess’s friends began to take her part, the hunchback bridegroom’s relatives insisted that her story was all lies. At last, both sides agreed that it would be best to appeal to Raja Vikramāditya to decide the dispute, and all started at once for his darbār.

Meanwhile, he and Bhānumatī had returned to their own palace in the same way as they had gone to Raja Bhoja’s, Vikramāditya, as before, keeping

¹¹ Implying that a spell had been used as well as a stick. In KSS, I, p. 74, the minister, Yaugandharāyaṇa, by means of a charm, gives himself the appearance of a hunchbacked, deformed old madman.

himself carefully concealed from his wife. In a few days, the two parties appeared in his *darbār*, and Raja Bhoja told the whole story. Vikramāditya could not help twitting his father-in-law with not having invited him to his daughter's wedding. However, he appointed a day for the hearing of the case. When it arrived, both sides appeared in court, and the proceedings opened. Then the Princess, who was seated behind a screen,¹² said, "The man who can give a correct account of what took place in my bridal chamber, will be proved thereby to be my husband." Vikramāditya, turning to the hunchback, called upon him to state in detail what had occurred in the bridal chamber. He began to tell as good a story as he was able to make up on the spur of the moment. The Princess, from behind the screen, shook her head in denial of what he said. Then Vikramāditya said with a smile, "Well, Princess, if I'm able to give the true account, you'll be mine, I suppose?" And he went on to recount all that had happened from the time he met the hunchback's father to the moment he left the bridal chamber. He finished by producing the Princess's ring and asking her to produce his own.¹³ She did so at once, and the whole assembly saw that it was inscribed

¹² The regular method of taking the evidence of a woman who is *pārda-nishīn*, *i.e.*, never appears in public, as women of the lower grades of society freely do. Now-a-days, however, the former are usually examined by a commission from the court.

¹³ Similarly, the 'Boy with a Moon and a Star' gets a gold necklace, a ring, and a handkerchief from his bride on the wedding-day, while he is disguised, and, afterwards, when in his proper form, proves his identity by their means—SIF, p. 133. Cf. *ib.*, p. 200. See, also, Note 8.

with the Raja Vikramāditya's name. All were amazed; Bhānumatī, in particular, was utterly dumb-founded. The Raja then dismissed the darbār, and, retiring to the Rānī's apartments with Bhānumatī and her sister,¹⁴ had a merry time, laughing and jesting, and making fun of the elder Rānī.¹⁵

¹⁴ See Appendix, Note 9.

¹⁵ 'Maid Maleen'—GHT, II, pp. 350 ff.—is an almost exact counterpart of the above story. The real, but ugly, bride of the Prince formerly betrothed to Maleen, substitutes the latter for herself at the wedding, and afterwards, when she takes her place, is exposed through not knowing what had been said when the pair were on their way to church, and not being able to produce the necklace the Prince had given his bride, just as the hunchback here could not relate what had happened in the bride-chamber, nor show any token of recognition. "Thou art the true bride, who went'st with me to church," says the Prince. Cf. the Princess's declaration on p. 235.

XXV.

KING VIKRAMĀDITYA AND HIS BRIDE.¹

ONCE on a time, Raja Vikramāditya ² was wandering about from country to country in disguise and pretending to be crazy. This was one of his ways of making himself acquainted with the condition of his subjects. In the course of his wanderings through the kingdom of one of his tributary Rajas, he came one evening to a temple, and made up his mind to pass the night there. In the temple was an image of Kālī. In the dead of night, the Raja's daughter, his Chief Minister's daughter, the Kotwal's daughter,

¹ This tale and the latter part of 'The Boy with a Moon and a Star'—SIF, pp. 127 ff.—are variants of the same original.

² Vikramāditya appears in this story as endowed with somewhat less marvellous powers than in some other Indian tales. It is related of him in 'The Wanderings of Vikram Maharajah'—FOD, p. 110—that he obtained from Gunputti—the god Gaṇeśa—the power of transferring his soul into any kind of body he pleased, and in the KSS—I, p. 350—Kuvera bestows on him the power of flying through the air. He is the hero of the Vetālapanchaviṁśati—'Vikram and the Vampire.' See KSS, Note on II, p. 232.

According to the legend, he was incurably fond of wandering. Even after getting nearly fixed for good in the shape of a parrot, he did not desist from roaming about like Hārūn-ar-Rashīd, in his own proper form, but disguised—FOD, pp. 127 ff. He appears as a candidate for service at the palace of the courtesan, Madanamālā—KSS, I, pp. 347 f. The habit seems to have been not unusual with Eastern Kings. See CLER, pp. 421 and 427; also, p. 428, with Note there, CLP, II, pp. 109 and 319, and KKT, p. 417,

and the Principal Merchant's daughter³ came to do *pūjā* there, and found the disguised Vikramāditya lying right across the way to the shrine. Thereupon the Merchant's daughter said, "Who are you, fellow? Get out of my road." Without moving, he replied, "Jump over me, if you like." The girl forthwith did so, and her example was followed by the Minister's daughter and the Kotwal's daughter. The Princess said to the man, "Who are you? Kindly let me pass. I am going to do *pūjā*." But he answered just as before, "If it's necessary for you to pass, then jump over me." "I can't do that," she said. "It's not right to jump over any person's body."⁴ "Well, I can't move," was the reply. The Princess begged him to do so again and again, but he positively refused to stir out of her way. At last, however, he said, "On one condition, I can get out of your road and let you pass." "What condition?" she asked. "Promise three times⁵ that you'll agree to it," he replied; "then I'll tell you what it is." The Princess promised solemnly,

³ See No. XX, Note 2.

⁴ To do so is to inflict a great indignity on the person whose body is stepped over, which is immensely aggravated, should the foot touch him. In B. C. Chatterji's novel '*Sītārām*,' one of the characters is condemned to be buried alive for stepping over an apparently sleeping Fakir, who maliciously brings his body into contact with the man's foot. Bengali women strongly object to stepping over even such a trifle as a cord stretched an inch or two above the ground. The incident plays the part of the "Good and Bad" or "Kind and Unkind" *motif* in this story. See MCF, pp. 191 ff. The Princess's ultimate good fortune is the reward of her scrupulousness in this matter.

⁵ This is still the equivalent of an inviolable oath. *E.g.*, Dīnabandhu Mitra's '*Lilāvati*' opens with the following dialogue between two of the characters: "Will you let me see her (the wife

repeating her promise three times, and again asked, "What is the condition?" "That you will marry me," was the reply. The girl struck her hand upon her forehead and cried out sorrowfully, "I, a Raja's daughter, who by rights should marry a Prince, to think that I should have to marry a mad-man!"⁶ But what could she do? She was bound by her promise. So she had to give her consent. The disguised Vikramāditya then moved aside and let her pass. When she came back, after duly doing *pūjā*, she said to him, "To-morrow, my *svayamvara* will take place. You must attend the assembly, and I will throw the garland over your neck." "Very good," he replied, and the Princess returned to the palace, thinking sadly of her cruel fate all the way.

Next day, the *svayamvara* assembly met.⁸ It was a very grand affair, for many wealthy and power-

of the person addressed)?" "I'll let you see her." "Will you let me see her?" "I'll let you see her." "Will you let me see her?" "I'll let you see her." "You've promised three times! If you don't let me see her now, you'll rot in hell." Cf. SIF, p. 17.

⁶ Cf. KKT, pp. 480 ff., where Gullala Shah gets the promise of his fourth wife, while disguised as a dirty, ragged beggar. Also the acceptance by one Princess of Bearskin—GHT, II, pp. 68 f.—and by another of the 'Devil's Sooty Brother' in his shabby smock-frock—*ib.*, II, p. 65.

⁷ The choosing of a husband by the daughter of a Raja or other noble Kshatriya—man of the ancient military caste—at a public gathering of suitors held for the purpose. The most famous event of the kind is the *svayamvara* of Damayantī, when she chose King Nala, though even the gods were present as candidates—MBH, Vana Parva, 67; KSS, I, pp. 559 ff.

⁸ In 'The Boy with a Moon and a Star,' the assembly is held in a garden, round which the Princess rides on an elephant, and, twice over, puts her gold necklace on the neck of the common-looking man—who is the disguised Boy—and takes him up beside her on the elephant—SIF, pp. 128 f., with Note 6 on pp. 280 f.

ful Rajas and Princes had gathered together from many countries, far and near, every one hoping that the Princess's choice would fall upon him. The Raja was showing them every kind of courteous attention, when his daughter entered, attended by one of her companions, who carried a garland of flowers, a bowl of sandal-wood paste, and a metal vessel with a spout, full of water. The royal suitors were all quite fascinated by her wonderful beauty. But she, taking not the slightest notice of any of them, began to look about for the madman. It was a while before she descried him, for he was sitting on one side, apart from the gay throng altogether. The moment the Princess caught sight of him, however, she walked straight up to him, washed his feet with the water, threw the garland round his neck, and marked his forehead with the sandal-wood paste.

Forthwith, there arose a terrible hullabaloo. All the disappointed royalties began to give vent to their disgust in the most unmeasured terms. "To think that such as we are to be passed over in favour of a low madman!" they cried. "The father of a daughter impudent and base enough to make such a choice, is from this moment excluded from our society! We'll have no more dealings with him

Neither in this tale nor in ours do the formalities of a *svayamvara* appear to be correctly described, though my narrator was a Brahman and fine Sk. scholar. In 'The Prince and his Colt,' the King orders all the men in his kingdom to defile past the palace, while his three daughters stand at the window, each with a golden apple in her hand, which she is to drop on the man of her choice. The youngest Princess, thrice over, lets hers fall on the Prince, who is disguised as a gardener—HGA, I, p. 94. Similarly, 'Princess Helena the Fair' chooses Vanya, who is standing modestly aside from the throng of grandees in his plain caftan—RRT, pp. 258 f.

whatever. It's a disgrace to us to stay a minute longer under his roof." So saying, they all immediately took their departure in high dudgeon. The poor Raja sat silent, hanging his head. "And this is the daughter I was so proud of!" he said to himself. "A shameless slut, through whom I've lost caste, family honour, everything!" His sons rampaged about the hall, swearing they would have the life of the sister who had brought such shame on them all. They had drawn their swords, and, in spite of the tears and entreaties of the Princess, were on the very point of fulfilling their threats, when the old Rání interposed. "What good will killing her do?" said she. "What was written on her forehead, has come about. Turn her out of the house and let her shift for herself as best she can." The Raja, too, thought this the best course to follow. So he had a little hut built outside of the palace precincts, and there the Princess and her husband had to take up their abode.⁹

The former showed herself a most devoted wife. Far from being discontented and resentful because she had been married to a madman, she did her utmost to make him comfortable and happy. Her husband designedly did all sorts of things by way of trying her love and patience, but her wifely devotion stood the test so well that he was filled with astonishment and admiration.¹⁰

⁹ Cf. FOD, pp. 131 ff. The Princess Buccoulee, after refusing many Princes, chooses Vikram, sitting in beggar's guise among the beggars at the palace-gate, and is turned out into the jungle with him by her parents.

¹⁰ Cf. the resignation displayed by the Princess in 'The Six Servants,' when her husband pretends to be a swineherd—GHT,

Some time passed in this way, till the day when the Raja's youngest son was to get rice to eat for the first time,¹¹ drew near, and all his sons-in-law came from their homes in various countries to be present at the ceremony. Meanwhile, the Princes, his sons, arranged that they and their guests should go out on a great hunting expedition. Hearing of this, the disguised Vikramāditya said to his wife, "If you could only get your father to let me have a horse, I, too, would go a-hunting."¹² "How can I go to make any such request?" she replied. "My father can't bear the sight of me. My brothers are ready to kill me outright, if they get the chance. My sisters greet me with such showers of abuse that you would think they had a hundred mouths each instead of one! Only my mother still shows some little kindness towards me. She sometimes gives me things I ask for you, but she has to do it on the sly. Once or twice, my sisters have caught her giving me things, and then they've abused her as badly as they abuse me. If I go and ask my father for such a thing as a horse, I don't believe I shall

II, pp. 197 f. It is a characteristically Hindu trait in our story that, though compelled to accept a husband, the wife does not need any of the discipline which King Thrushbeard—GHT, I, pp. 203 ff.—and the Prince in 'The Humbled Princess'—GOS, I, pp. 118 ff.—consider necessary for their wives.

¹¹ Sk., *annaprāśana*. Quite an event in Hindu social life. See MWR, pp. 358 f.

¹² Cf. SIF, p. 130. There the wife urges the husband to go riding and hunting. He pretends to prefer to walk, because he has the horse, Kaṭar, hidden in the jungle. By twisting this horse's and his own right ears, he turns it into a donkey and himself into a common-looking, ugly man, and, by twisting the left, he restores it to the form of a horse and himself to that of "a grand young Prince"—pp. 126 f. and 130 f.

ever come back alive.” “Oh, no fear!” said her husband. “You go and ask. Nothing worse than a refusal can come of that.”

The Princess had perforce to consent, and betook herself slowly and apprehensively to her mother. Finding her alone in her room, she seized the opportunity at once, and said to her, “Mother, your son-in-law wants a horse. He wishes to go a-hunting.” The old Rání burst into tears at the sight of her daughter’s evident distress. “Alas, my dear!” said she. “To think that all this was fated to come upon you! Well, I’ll see what I can do.” Saying this, she went away to the Raja, and told him of her daughter’s request. He at once flew into a great rage. “What can her husband want with a horse?” he cried. “A low imbecile of a fellow, who can hardly move about on his own legs! Set him up with a horse! And he’ll go a-hunting, will he? What next, I should like to know.” But the Rání wasn’t to be put off. She kept on urging her request, till the Raja, to get rid of her and her importunities, ordered that the most sorry, lame, broken-winded old hack ¹³ in his stables should be sent to his son-in-law.

The Princess wended her way back to her hut, leading the poor, shabby-looking brute, herself. But her husband was delighted to see it, though, strange to say, the animal shed tears when it saw him. He patted it kindly and comforted it, then said to his wife, “To-morrow you must cook some

¹³ Cf. the condition of the horse selected by the *hīraman*, though, like the one here, it is really a *pakshirāja*—LDB, p. 214. Cf., also, FOD, pp. 77 and 80; CAS, p. 74.

breakfast for me as early as ever you can.” Accordingly, the Princess got up before dawn and had breakfast ready in good time. After he had eaten, her husband mounted the horse and rode away. The Princess stood at the door of the hut, gazing after them. As long as she was able to see them, the horse limped along at a snail’s pace, but, the moment it was out of her view, it assumed the form proper to it as a *pōqhirāj*,¹⁴ and said to Vikramāditya, “How much longer will your Majesty remain in this condition?” “Have patience, *pōqhirāj*,” he replied. “The time is now almost at an end.” Saying this, he struck it once with the whip, and, in an instant, it had carried him into the middle of a dense forest. Vikramāditya dismounted and called to mind Tāl and Betāl,¹⁵ who immediately appeared. “Listen, Tāl and Betāl,” said he to them. “Build a palace here as quickly as possible, then collect all the deer

¹⁴ Sk., *pakshirāja*. See No. XXVI, Note 2. Regarding horses endowed with intelligence and the faculty of human speech, see Appendix, Note 10. Vikramāditya, also, presently reassumes his own proper appearance. Cf. SIF, p. 43.

¹⁵ Sk., *vetāla*, which, strictly, means a demon that takes possession of a corpse. See KSS, I, p. 74, with Note, and pp. 132 f. Such was the being that narrated to Vikramāditya the twenty-five tales—Hindi, ‘*Baital-Pachīśī*’, ‘Vikram and the Vampire’—and enabled him to get the better of the devotee who was seeking to compass his destruction. This *Vetāla* is the *Betāl* of our story. “Tāl” is merely the last half of the word, out of which the popular imagination has fabricated the name of an additional demon. Before his birth, Vikramāditya was declared by Śiva to be destined to hold supremacy over all Rākshasas, Yakshas, *Vetālas*, etc.—KSS, II, p. 565—and his actual possession of this sovereignty was probably regarded as having commenced with his worsting of the murderous devotee—KSS, II, pp. 359 f. In this respect, he occupies in the Hindu Folk-tale world the same position as Solomon in the Musalman. See CLER, pp. 20 and 163 f.

from this forest and confine them within the precincts of the palace. And make all the necessary arrangements for my staying here.” Tāl and Betāl had the palace ready ¹⁶ almost as soon as the Raja had finished giving his orders. And, in a very short time, they collected all the deer of the forest and confined them within the palace-grounds.¹⁷ Vikramāditya, who had assumed the dress and appearance of a Raja, went inside and sat down, while Tāl and Betāl, transforming themselves into a couple of durwans, took up their position at the gate.

This was the day the Princes had fixed for their great hunt. They arrived early in the forest, and roamed hither and thither through it the whole day, without seeing a single deer. By evening, they were quite worn out. Their throats were parched with thirst, and they were so tired they could hardly move a step farther. Yet they felt ashamed to go home without having killed any game at all. Just then, they caught sight of a fine mansion quite near at hand, and made their way to it as well as they could. On approaching it, they saw, to their astonishment, that its enclosed grounds were crowded with deer. “Who in the world can have built a palace in such a place?” said they, wonderingly, to

¹⁶ Similarly, the Fairy, Hammála, builds a magnificent palace in the jungle for Tāj-ul-mulúk—CLER, p. 275 f. For other cases of instantaneous magical production of buildings, etc., see FOD, pp. 22 f. and 69; GHT, I, p. 303; HGA, I, p. 105; RRT, p. 266; GOS, I, pp. 151, 214, and 218; CAS, p. 4.

¹⁷ The ‘Prince with a Moon and a Star’ shoots all the game and then sits down beside delicious water and roast-meat—SIF, p. 131. ‘Muntisiuri’s Sister’ collects all the birds of the earth in one night within the garden which she has enabled her brother to produce—GOS, I, p. 224.

each other. "And what can he want with so many deer? Anyhow, if he'd only be good enough to give us a few to take home, we should be greatly obliged to him." Talking thus among themselves, they went up to the durwans at the gate, and asked them to make their request known to their master. They did so at once, and Vikramāditya said, "Tell them I've no objections to give them deer, if they agree to one condition." The durwans returned to the gate with this message. "Very good," the Princes replied, "we'll comply with the condition. Let him be so good as to inform us what it is." The durwans went back with this word to their master. He then said, "Each of them must submit to be branded with the heated tobacco-holder of a hookah.¹⁸ When that's done, they may have as many deer as they require." The Princes were rather taken aback when the durwans communicated this message to them. Some would fain have backed out. But they had promised, they wanted the deer badly, and these were not to be got, unless the whole company complied with the Raja's demand. So, at last, all signified assent, comforting themselves with the reflection that their clothes would hide the mark,

¹⁸ In SIF, p. 131, the Princes are branded with red-hot piceo to mark them as thieves. See *ib.*, Notes 6 and 7 on pp. 281 ff. In 'The Rose of Bakāwali,' Dilbar brands the four brothers of Tāj-ul-mulūk on the back, as being her slaves, and so shames them afterwards—CLER, pp. 268 f. and 287. Cf. *ib.*, p. 529; KSS, I, pp. 90 ff.; KKT, pp. 223 f.; FOD, pp. 213 f. In 'The Prince and his Colt,' the hero offers to give his brothers-in-law some of the Water of Life, if they will each stand a kick from his horse "auf den Hintern," and afterwards claims them as his slaves, because so marked—HGA, I, pp. 95 ff. Most of this story is very similar to ours. The *svayamvara*, the horse-and-clothes-changing incidents, etc., all reappear in it.

and that nobody was likely to look for it under them. Vikramāditya now came out to the gate, and the branding was done under his own supervision. The operation over, he gave each of them a deer, and they departed triumphantly for the palace, as if they had had a first-rate day's sport. Vikramāditya then ordered Tāl and Betāl to make the palace vanish, and, mounting his horse, set off on his way back to the hut. As soon as he came near enough for his wife to be able to see him, he assumed again the dress and appearance of a lunatic beggar,¹⁹ and the *pōqhirāj*, that of a broken-down old hack.

As it got later and later, and yet her husband did not return, the Princess had become quite apprehensive, and was looking out anxiously for him. So she was overjoyed when she caught sight of him, and, running to meet him, helped him to dismount. He pretended to be quite exhausted, and said, "I've had a terribly hard day. You must help me into the house." The Princess did so at once, and then exerted herself to the utmost to refresh him and relieve his fatigue. Afterwards, they had supper, and then lay down to rest. But, instead of going to sleep, the Princess began to weep quietly. Observing this, her husband asked what was wrong. "What's the use of my telling?" she replied. "Oh, tell me," said he, "use or no use." "Well," answered she, "to-morrow, my little brother will get rice to eat for the first time. All our other relatives who have come to be present at the ceremony, will be

¹⁹ King Nala obtained a similar power of shape-shifting. A snake bit him, and he instantly became a black, deformed man. The snake then gave him a "fire-bleached" pair of garments, the putting on of which restored him to his proper form—KSS, I, p. 565.

giving him beautiful presents. Only I shall have nothing to give. That's why I can't help weeping." After a pause, she added, "I was afraid of vexing you; that's the reason I didn't wish to say anything to you about it." "Don't weep, Princess," said her husband. "A wife so virtuous and devoted to her husband as you are, can't fail to obtain her wish." He did his best to comfort her with many such kind words, and the Princess, reflecting that all this was her destiny and must just be borne patiently, presently fell asleep. Then Vikramāditya got up and mentally summoned ²⁰ Tāl and Betāl, who instantly appeared. He ordered them to fetch at once a set of jewelled ornaments, a beautiful *sāri*, and two trays of costly gems.²¹ They vanished, and almost immediately reappeared with all the things he had asked for. He told them to set the things down, and then gave them leave to depart. But, before they had done so, while the Raja was still talking with them, the Princess chanced to awake. Observing this, he hastened to put on again the disguise he had laid aside, but she caught his hand and cried, "Tell me who you are. I can't let you deceive me any longer. I won't leave off asking, till you tell me the truth." And, snatching the disguise out of his hand, she threw it into the fire.²² Then he said, "Princess, I am Vikramāditya." The moment she heard the name, she gave a great start, and, drawing

²⁰ See No. VI, Note 22.

²¹ Bengali, *māṇik*, Sk., *māṇikya*, often translated "ruby," fabulous precious stones, a single one of which was said to be worth the entire treasures of seven kings. See No. XXVI, Notes 10 and 11.

²² It seems to be implied that the disguise was a magical one which, when assumed, simultaneously changed the King's bodily

back from him, she stood with her hands joined in suppliant attitude and said, "Your Majesty, forgive me. I've committed many faults."²³ "What nonsense is that you're talking?" he replied. "I can't say how indebted to you I feel for the love and devotion you have shown." So saying, he seated her beside him, caressing her affectionately. Suddenly her eyes lighted on the gems. "What are those, Your Majesty?" she inquired. "Why, you said you wished to give a present to-morrow," he replied. "So I've had those brought for you." The Princess had never in all her life seen gems of that kind. She gazed at them in a transport of delight. Her heart was too full for her to speak. She could only silently bless her wonderful good fortune.

In the morning, she arrayed herself in her husband's gifts, and, taking up the trays of gems, she repaired to the palace. Everybody was astonished at the splendour of her attire. The Raja, himself, was

appearance; consequently, its destruction put an end to his power of appearing in any but his own proper form. The incident, thus, represents here the frequently recurring *motif* of the destruction of the animal-skin of a—generally spell-bound—hero or heroine in more archaic Folk-tales. *E.g.*, in 'The Jackal, the Barber, and the Brahman,' the Jackal, who is really a great Raja, takes off his jackal-skin, washes and brushes it, and hangs it up to dry, whereupon his little sister-in-law seizes it and burns it, thus putting an end to his wanderings about in that guise. FOD, pp. 183 ff. Cf. *ib.*, pp. 222 f. and 226; SIF, p. 49; GHT, II, pp. 96, 210 ff., and 288 ff.; HGA, I, pp. 129 f.; CLER, p. 58. See MCF, pp. 145, 156, 328, 341 ff.; CLP, I, pp. 206 ff.

²³ When a King is unexpectedly recognized as such, a Hindu begs his pardon as a matter of course. In 'King Thrushbeard,' the Princess begs his forgiveness for her treatment of him, when he was supposed to be only a fiddler, but, unlike our heroine, with very good reason—GHT, I, p. 206.

fairly bewildered. But, when she presented her gift to her brother, everyone's amazement was redoubled. The assembled royalties were utterly dumbfounded. The Princess then went away to the old Rānī and said, "I've something to tell you, mother. Your son-in-law is nobody less than Raja Vikramāditya himself." "You don't say so!" cried the startled Rānī. "Yes, indeed, mother," was the reply. "He was wandering about in disguise. That's how nobody recognized him. Last night, I burned the disguise." The old Rānī fairly sobbed with joy. Hurrying to the Raja, she said, "Your Majesty, the daughter you couldn't say enough ill about, is the goddess Lakshmī²⁴ herself! The man on whose neck she threw her bridal wreath, is the Raja Vikramāditya!" The Raja was more than astounded at this news. Remembering the sort of treatment his daughter and her husband had received, he felt decidedly apprehensive as to what might happen next.

Meanwhile, Vikramāditya had again summoned Tāl and Betāl, and told them to furnish him at once with palkis and bearers, elephants, horses, attendants, soldiers, and what not else, as he was about to go to the Raja's darbār. Everything appeared instantaneously. Arraying himself in magnificent royal robes, he got into a palki and proceeded

²⁴ See No. VI, Note 16. *Lōghā-meye*—a Lakshmī of a girl—is one of the commonest expressions of endearment in Bengali. The mere name of Lakshmī has an auspicious efficacy. Hence, it is usual to avert the possible evil consequences of even naming *Vṛihaspati-bār* or Thursday—one of the most unlucky days of the week—by calling it *Lakshmī-bār*. Merchants make a point of buying and selling largely on the day of Lakshmī's annual *pūjā*, no matter what prices may be.

with his retinue to the palace, Tāl and Betāl following. As soon as he appeared in the darbār, the Raja rose, and bowing in suppliant attitude before him with his upper garment over his shoulders, humbly begged his pardon. Vikramāditya took his hand kindly, and, raising him up, said, "What are you talking about, my dear sir? You, my worshipful father-in-law! How can you do anything to me for which you must beg my pardon? But there are some servants of mine in your darbār here. I've come to take possession of them." Rather perturbed at this, the Raja answered wonderingly, "Your Majesty, all the Rajas in the world are your servants. How can there be any who are your servants more than the rest?" "Oh, that's another matter," was the reply. "It's some servants marked with my own brand I'm in search of." So saying, he ordered Tāl and Betāl to pick out and bring forward the persons they had branded. Forthwith, they seized the Raja's sons and sons-in-law, and dragged them before him. Then, pulling aside their clothes, they displayed the brands, to the wonderment of the whole darbār, and Vikramāditya claimed them as his servants. There they stood, hanging their heads for shame. The old Raja entreated Vikramāditya to pardon their misconduct towards himself and his wife, praising his clemency, and urging it wasn't worth his while to inflict any further punishment upon them. Vikramāditya was easily enough persuaded, as he was quite satisfied with the amusement he had had at their expense. He spent a few days more with his father-in-law, and then returned with his bride to his own capital.

XXVI.

LEARNING AND MOTHERWIT.

ONCE there were two friends, a Raja's son and his Minister's son.¹ From the time that they were very little boys, they ate together, slept together, rambled about together—in short, were quite inseparable. One day, as they were talking with one another, the Prince put this question to his friend, “Brother, which is best—learning or motherwit?” “Motherwit, I should say,” promptly replied the Minister's son. “I don't agree with you,” rejoined the Prince. “In my opinion, learning is best.” They argued the point for a long time, without either convincing the other. Now, the Prince was the more learned of the two, and, consequently, was a bit conceited. He, at length, said to his companion, “Why waste time in useless argument? Let's settle

¹ The most common of all pairs of friends in Indian Folk-tales. Cf. No. XX, p. 175; also, SIF, p. 73; FOD, p. 72 f.; LDB, p. 17; KKT, p. 131 and 213. The Minister's son is invariably the cleverer of the two, just as the Minister is cleverer than the King. *E.g.*, in the frame-narrative of the KSS, the King of Vatsa is all but an imbecile, while his Minister, Yaugandharāyaṇa, is an embodiment of ability and craft. See No. XIII, Note 3. As, in ancient India, the Minister was usually a Brahman, one wonders whether the intellectual superiority to the King, regularly ascribed to him in Folk-tales, is due to Brahmans' having had a chief hand in shaping and preserving these.

the question by actual experiment.” “Yes, that’ll be the best way,” answered the other. So they arranged that, on a certain day, they should both set out in different directions, and, after a time, return and faithfully relate to each other their adventures and achievements. The day soon came; they bade one another good-bye, and rode away on their swift and beautiful *pōqhirāj* horses.²

The Prince rode on a very long way, and, at last, entered a vast forest. It was very dense. The trees had grown so close together that it was possible to see only a few yards ahead. Still, the Prince pushed on as best he could, and, at length, arrived before a little hut. Dismounting at the door, he looked in, and saw a Muni³ with closed eyes, absorbed in meditation. The Prince remained there till, after some days, the Muni’s meditation came to an end, and he returned to ordinary consciousness. He then began to wait upon him, and performed any services he required.⁴ The Muni was much gratified by the Prince’s attentions, and, at last, said to him, “Prince, I am very highly pleased by your dutiful behaviour.

² Sk., *pakshirāja* = king of birds, an epithet of the colossal half-man, half-vulture creature on which Vishṇu rides, and of Rāmachandra’s ally, the vulture-king, Jaṭāyu. Cf. the Persian *simurgh* and *rukh*. In Folk-tales, it is the name of a kind of horse, which sometimes seems to be merely an ordinary horse, but of a very fine breed—as here and in LDB, p. 17—sometimes, a supernaturally gifted creature, which—though it is uncertain whether it was believed to be winged or not—can travel through the air with the speed of lightning—cf. Pegasus—talk, etc. See LDB, pp. 214 ff., No. XXV, Note 14, and MCF, pp. 173 and 236. Cf. the Indarpuri horse, CAS, pp. 70 ff.

³ A holy sage, possessed of superhuman powers.

⁴ See No. XXVII, Note 6. So Rāmachandra waited on the hermit, Agastya—KSS, II, 390,

As a reward, take this ring. Whatever you ask from it, you will obtain.”⁵ The Prince received the gift with many expressions of gratitude, and, making a humble obeisance to the Muni, mounted his horse and made his way out of the forest.

He continued his journey some four or five days longer, and arrived in a kingdom that was altogether strange to him. There he learned that the Raja of that country had a daughter, who was the most beautiful woman in the whole world, and that she had proclaimed that she would marry the man who could give her whatever she asked, every day for a month.⁶ On the other hand, whoever, after undertaking to do this, should fail to keep his engagement, should become her prisoner and slave, and be obliged to carry the water for her bath.⁷ When he heard this, the Prince thought to himself, “The ring I got from the Muni will, no doubt, enable me to win the Princess.” Many Princes had tried

⁵ MCF, pp. 201 f. and 214 ff. The ring in this tale acts of itself, and on being simply spoken to, cf. CLP, I, pp. 477 f. Often, the magical procedure is more elaborate. *E.g.*, Gullala Shah receives from the Wazir's wife a ring which, on being shown to the fire, will summon two powerful jinns to do his bidding—KKT, pp. 473 f. Similarly, in ‘The Three Grateful Animals,’ the hero receives from the father of the snake he has rescued a signet-ring which, when licked, causes a black man to appear who executes any order—HGA, I, pp. 110 f. Cf. CLP, I, pp. 470 ff. Instances of other articles that act in the same way, will be found in KKT, p. 86; GOS, I, p. 22; CAS, pp. 2 ff.; CLP, I, pp. 74, 80, 88 ff., 102 ff., 322 ff., 460 f.

⁶ The Princess's having the disposal of her own hand is decidedly un-Hindu.

⁷ Cf. the risks run by those who played dice with the Rākshasī—LDB, p. 191—the disguised Princess—*ib.*, p. 277—and the courtesan—KKT, pp. 84 ff.

to accomplish the task and failed, and were now the Princess's captives, but, trusting in the power of the magical ring, the Prince felt certain that he was in no danger of meeting with any such misfortune.

Accordingly, he procured a lodging in the house of a garland-weaver,⁸ and told her to take a message to the palace that he desired to marry the Princess, and was ready to furnish her for a month with anything she might ask for. The garland-weaver supplied the royal household daily with flowers. It was, therefore, easy for her to carry the Prince's message to the Princess.⁹ She, in her turn, sent back word to him, by the same woman, that she was much gratified by the wish the Prince had expressed, and would begin from the next day to let him know what things she desired. The garland-weaver duly informed the Prince, who was greatly delighted, and set about providing himself with all such articles as he was likely to need for a lengthy stay in the city.

Early next morning, he was sitting in the verandah of the house, when two of the maid-servants of the Princess appeared, and, bowing respectfully, said, "Your Highness, our Princess requests you to send her two sets of jewelled gold ornaments." Asking them to wait a little, the Prince went to his room, and, opening the box in which he kept the ring, he

⁸ See No. XIX, Note 8. "Garland-weaver" is the meaning of the word in Sk. In Bengali, it is used in the sense of gardener's wife or female flower-seller. The apparent importance of gardeners and their families in Indian tales—see KKT, Note on p. 361—is, perhaps, due to the fact that flowers are indispensable for Hindu daily worship.

⁹ As the Princess's old nurse does in the first story in 'Vikram and the Vampire.' Cf. KKT, p. 219.

asked it, "Ring, whose are you now?" The ring answered, "Formerly, I was the Muni's; now, I'm yours." "Then give me two sets of jewelled gold ornaments," said the Prince, and, immediately, the articles appeared. The Prince took them up, and gave them to the Princess's maids, who were greatly astonished at their beauty, for they had never seen anything that could be compared with them. Humbly saluting the Prince, they went back with them to their mistress. She admired the exquisite jewels as much as they had done, and wondered much in her own mind where the Prince could have procured anything so fine.

Next day, she sent four maids to the Prince, with instructions to ask for four sets of ornaments of the same kind and, also, four large rubies.¹⁰ These the Prince procured from the ring as easily as the first sets of jewels, and delivered them to the maids to take to their mistress. When they were brought to the Princess, she was, of course, greatly pleased, but her curiosity as to how the Prince was able to obtain such things was even greater than her delight at getting them. Next day, she sent sixteen maids, whom she told to ask for sixteen platefuls of rubies, sixteen elephants, and sixteen horses. The Prince addressed the ring in the same words as before, and all the things demanded were immediately supplied. When her maids returned to her with them, the Prin-

¹⁰ For an account of the submarine production of Indian Folk-tale rubies, which are infinitely superior to the ordinary stone, see LDB, pp. 223 ff. Cf. KKT, p. 205. Fishes bring rubies to the youngest of 'The Three Princes.' Also, SIF, p. 66. The man who went to seek his fate, gets from an alligator the ruby which caused a burning in its stomach. See No. XXV, Note 21.

cess was fairly astounded. "Did anyone ever hear of the like?" said she to herself. "Each of these gems is worth all the treasures of seven kings, yet this Prince finds no difficulty in supplying great piles of them."¹¹

So it went on from day to day. No matter how costly were the things the Princess asked for, or how vast the quantities of them required, the Prince furnished them without the slightest difficulty. The month was now near an end, and the Princess became more and more uneasy. "This will never do," she thought to herself. "It's plain I shall never get the better of him merely by increasing my demands. I must try some other plan." So she called the garland-weaver, and said to her, "Where does the Prince get all the things he gives me?" "I haven't the slightest idea," was the reply. "To judge by the style in which he's living in my house, the Prince doesn't seem to possess any treasures worth speaking of." "Well," said the Princess, "you must manage somehow or other to get to the bottom of the mystery. If you succeed in finding out the Prince's secret for me, I'll give you any reward you like to name." The garland-weaver promised to do her best.

She went home, and, as soon as she got an opportunity, she began a conversation with the Prince. After talking of this, that, and the other thing, she said to him, "Sir, there's one thing that completely puzzles me. No one, seeing how you live, would believe that you are even a petty Raja's son. And yet you are able, without any trouble, to supply the

¹¹ Cf. the value of the gems contained in the fruits given to the King by the ascetic, in the Introd. to 'Vikram and the Vampire.'

most costly treasures, and in any quantity. How is it you can do this?" "My good woman," he replied, "that's a secret that you've no occasion to bother your head about." "Oh," said she, "that may be all very true. But I'm dying with curiosity to know. And why should you be afraid to tell me? I solemnly promise you I won't let it go any farther." "What good will it do you to know?" still objected the Prince. "See," she persisted, "here you are living in my house, and I look after you just as if you were my own son. Why have secrets from me? Tell me! Do!" At last, the Prince, seeing there was no hope of getting peace in any other way, foolishly yielded to her importunity, and told her all about the ring.¹²

As soon as his back was turned, off she hied to the Princess, and reported to her all she had learned. The Princess was overjoyed, and quite overwhelmed the traitress with splendid gifts. Next day was the last of the month but one. That day, she sent only one maid-servant to the Prince, but she was instructed to ask for the ring. When this request was made, the Prince was utterly dumbfounded. He could hardly believe his ears. Now he saw what a fool he had been to confide in a woman like the garland-weaver. But what could he do? He had no

¹² The "Delila" *motif* is a favourite in Folk-tales, both Eastern and Western. See KSS, II, pp. 54 ff.; GHT, I, p. 54, and II, pp. 120 f.; GOS, I, pp. 195 f. In the story of 'The Three Grateful Animals,' the hero weakly lets himself be wheedled by his unfaithful wife out of the secret of his all-powerful signet-ring, and she steals it and goes off with her paramour—HGA, I, pp. 112 f. This *motif* occurs very frequently in the 'Separable Life' and kindred cycles—e.g., LDB, pp. 84 f. and 251 f.; FOD, p. 14; GOS, I, pp. 144 f.; KKT, pp. 382 f.

alternative but to deliver up the ring.¹³ Next morning, the last of the month, the Princess sent one of her women to ask for a hundred rupees. The poor Prince was unable to produce even this trifling sum. The wager was lost. As soon as the Princess's messenger had returned to her empty-handed, the Raja's officers were dispatched to make the Prince their prisoner. He wept and entreated. But what good could that do? He was at once marched off, and set to carry in the Princess's bath-water.

Meanwhile, the Minister's son also, after riding on for several days, had arrived at the capital city of a foreign kingdom. Night was falling, so he was glad to become the guest of a hospitable Brahman, whose family consisted of himself, his wife and son, and the son's lately married wife. All treated their guest with great kindness and courtesy, but he was not long in becoming aware that they were in great distress.¹⁴ He heard them talking earnestly to one another in the next room, and weeping bitterly all the time. The son said, "Let me go. It would be a shame that my mother or father should go, when I'm here." His young wife said, "You all remain where you are. I will go. I'm a stranger's daughter. What will my death matter? You will easily enough find another wife for your son." The old people could do nothing but weep. All this surprised

¹³ With the Prince's—to Western ways of thinking, foolish—compliance, cf. that of the Minister, Nāgārjuna, whose habit it was, after his daily prayers, to grant petitioners whatever they asked for. His enemy, the Prince Jivahara, one day, asked him for his head, and he gave it. He had bestowed the same gift ninety-nine times before in previous births—KSS, I, pp. 377 f.

¹⁴ Cf. LDB, pp. 73 ff.

the Minister's son very much. Curious to know what was afoot, he called his host, and asked, "Mōhāshoy, what's wrong?" The Brahman at first would not tell him. "What the better will you be for knowing?" said he. "Do tell me," urged the other. "Who knows what may come of it?" At last, the Brahman yielded, and said, "Well, then, Mōhāshoy, listen. Some time since, our Raja made a compact with a Raqhōshī¹⁵ that he should send her daily for food one person from one or other household in this city.¹⁶ Before that, she had been devastating the country, by devouring people without let or hindrance. To-day, it's our family's turn to send

¹⁵ Sk., *Rākshasī*, fem. of *Rākshasa*, Beng., Raqhosh. These are fiendish beings, akin to the Western goblins, ogres, trolls, and the like. They "haunt cemeteries, disturb sacrifices, harass devout men, animate dead bodies, devour human beings, and vex and afflict mankind in all sorts of ways." In their natural shape, they have "up-standing hair, yellow as the flames vomited forth from their mouths terrible with tusks, gigantic bodies black as smoke, and pendulous breasts and bellies"—KSS, II, p. 524. But they can assume any form they please, animal or other, and the females often appear as beautiful women in order to entrap men. See KKT, p. 42; LDB, pp. 65 ff., 117 ff., 270 ff. With the *Rākshasas*, may be compared the corpse-devouring fiend in 'The Story of Marusia'—RRT, p. 17, with Note. But the former seem, as a rule, to prefer fresh meat which they have killed for themselves. Cf., also, the Greek Drakos and Lamia—Abbott, 'Macedonian Folklore,' pp. 264 f. and 265 f. See, also, SIF, Notes XI, 2, 3, 4 on pp. 259 ff., and 'Cannibalism,' 'Rākshasa,' and 'Rākshasī' in MCF, Index.

¹⁶ With this compact, cf. KSS, II, pp. 312 ff. and Note on p. 318. Garuḍa was devouring the Nāgas—semi-divine snake-beings—wholesale. Vāsuki—the divine snake-king—accordingly made an agreement with him to send him one daily to a certain spot. Jīmūtavāhana sacrifices himself in Śankhachūṛa's place. Cf. KSS, I, pp. 183 ff., and 'Sagas from the Far East,' pp. 19, 286, and 292,

somebody. That's why we're all weeping." "Mō-háshoy," replied the Minister's son, "don't you distress yourselves. I'll go."¹⁷ The Brahman started. "That is out of the question," said he. "Shall we send you, who are our guest, into the jaws of the Raqhōshí in order to save ourselves? Who ever heard of such a thing? A crime like that would bring me to perdition."¹⁸ "Keep your mind easy," was the reply. "There's not the slightest occasion for anxiety, if you do as I say. Only there are certain things you must supply me with, before I go." After a deal of persuasion, the Brahman was induced to yield a reluctant consent to his guest's proposal, and asked, "What are the things you require?" "They are these," answered the young man: "a very thick rope, a pot of wet lime, a few spades, a pan of fire, and two sharp-pointed iron rods." The Brahman at once procured all these things, though wondering greatly in his own mind what they could be wanted for.

Taking them all along with him, the Minister's son proceeded to the abode of the Raqhōshí. There he put the iron rods in the fire to heat, and then sat down with his weapons ready to his hand to await her coming, having first shut the door of the house. Presently, the Raqhōshí arrived, and, surprised at

¹⁷ Similarly—KKT, p. 39—the Prince takes the place of the potter's son, as husband to the Princess whose bridegrooms always died on the bridal night. And, in 'The Witch-Girl,' the Kossack effects the deliverance of the family he finds mourning because their turn to be visited by Death has come—RRT, pp. 269 f. Cf. CAS, p. 20; CLP, I, pp. 160 and 164.

¹⁸ Being a breach of hospitality. Probably, too, the Minister's son is thought of as a Brahman.

finding herself shut out of her own house, asked, "Who's inside?" The young man, disguising his voice, in turn asked gruffly, "Who are you?" "I'm a Raqhosh," was the reply. "And I," retorted he in the same harsh, strange-sounding voice, "am the Raqhoshes' Jom,"¹⁹ Kaqhosh."²⁰ That kind of voice was quite new to the Raqhōshí, and, as for Kaqhosh, she had never in her life either seen or heard of him. Much taken aback, she asked, "What do you want here?" "What do *you* want here?" he answered fiercely. The Raqhōshí began to feel a bit frightened. "Sir Kaqhosh," said she, "I've never, all my life, set eyes on you, and should like to know what like you are. Please, show me your hair." "First show me your hair," was the reply. The Raqhōshí plucked a hair from her head and passed it in through a crack in the window-shutter. Thereupon the Minister's son pushed the thick rope out through the crack. When she saw it, the Raqhōshí thought to herself, "I never saw such hair. What a monster he must be to have hair like that!" Then she said, "Sir Kaqhosh, let me see what sort of nails you have." "Show me your nails," he answered, just as before. The Raqhōshí tore off one of her finger-nails and passed it in through the crack, whereupon

¹⁹ Sk., *Yama*, the god of death, hence, a fatal enemy.

²⁰ In 'The Blind Man, the Deaf Man, and the Donkey'—FOD, pp. 230 ff.—the Rākshasa is bluffed in very similar fashion, though the details vary. The Blind Man calls himself the Rākshasas' father, Bakshas. Cf. the cowing of the Bear in GHT, I, pp. 118 f.; of the giant and the King's servants by the 'Valiant Little Tailor,'—GHT, I, pp. 87 and 93; of the Drakos by the Bride—Abbott's 'Macedonian Folklore,' pp. 261 f.; also, LDB, pp. 76 f. and 258 ff.; CLP, I, pp. 136 ff. See, too, No. XXVIII, Note 3. On the invariable stupidity of ogres, giants, and the like, see MCF, pp. 299 ff.

the young man, in his turn, shoved out a couple of spades. The Raqhōshī was panic-stricken at the sight of them. "Good gracious!" she thought to herself, "this Kaqhosh must be the Raqhoshes' Jom, and no mistake about it." Once again, she said, "Sir Kaqhosh, let me see some of your spittle." "Let me see some of yours," he replied as before. The Raqhōshī, spitting into a dish, passed it in through the opening in the window, and the Minister's son threw out the pot of lime. This was too much for her. Trembling with terror, she cried, "Sir Kaqhosh, I promise to go away and never to come back. But let me have just one look at you before I depart for good." "Very well," said he. "Come and stand close up to the window, and I'll show myself to you." Saying this, he rose, and, taking up the iron rods, which were now red-hot at the points, he went to the window, and, the moment the Raqhōshī put her eyes to the opening to get a look at him, he thrust the glowing irons into them.²¹ Immediately, she fell down with a horrible shriek, and expired. The Minister's son then sallied forth, and, cutting out her tongue,²² went inside again and lay down to sleep.

In the morning, when people began to pass by

²¹ Cf. the blinding of Polyphemus. Similarly, the smith blinds 'The One-eyed Likho' with a red-hot awl—RRT, p. 180; cf. CLP, I, p. 445.

²² In LDB, pp. 73 ff., Sahasra Dal cuts off the Rākshasī's head holus-bolus. But, usually, only the tongue is taken. *E.g.*, in 'The Two Brothers,' the younger cuts out the tongues from the dragon's seven heads and, with them, ultimately confounds the false claimant—GHT, I, pp. 251 and 259. Cf. *ib.*, II, pp. 105 ff.; KKT, pp. 369 and 371; CAS, pp. 20 f.

the place, they were overjoyed to see the Raqhōshí lying dead. Now, the Raja had promised that whoever should slay the Raqhōshí, was to receive his daughter in marriage, along with half of the kingdom.²³ So, in hope of obtaining these splendid rewards, almost every man who passed, cut off a piece from one or other of the limbs of the corpse, and hurried with it to the palace. Thus, when the Raja rose and came forth from his room, he found his hall of audience already crammed with people, all claiming to have killed the Raqhōshí, and displaying a bit of her dead body in proof of the truth of their statements. The Raja found himself in a quandary. Summoning his Chief Minister, he asked him what was to be done by way of determining which of the host of claimants had really slain the monster. "Send for the person whose family had to send someone to be devoured by the Raqhōshí

²³ Such an offer—common as it is in Folk-tales, both Indian and Western—is quite inexplicable by any Hindu law or custom. Stories in which half the kingdom is thus promised along with the Princess—as in GHT, I, p. 90—or the husband becomes his royal father-in-law's successor—as in GHT, I, p. 249 and II, p. 65, and GOS, I, p. 211—seem to preserve reminiscences of a primitive time when descent was reckoned and inheritance devolved by the female line and, probably, women were the sole legal owners of property—as they are now among the Khasis of Assam. Cf. the very curious commencement of the story of 'The Twelve Brothers'—GHT, I, p. 38. When the Queen is with child the thirteenth time, the King declares that, if the thirteenth child is a girl, the twelve boys shall die, in order that her possessions may be great and the kingdom fall to her alone. The sons, therefore, flee to the forest. Indian narrators seem to have felt that there was something odd about such arrangements regarding royal marriage or inheritance as those referred to above, hence, the stories usually account for them by explaining that the Princess was an only child.

last night," he suggested. "By examining him, we may be able to ascertain what has actually happened." The Brahman appeared at once in response to the Raja's summons, and the latter asked him, "Brahman, who went to the Raqhōshī's house last night?" The Brahman had been feeling very uneasy about having exposed his guest to danger. "Your Majesty," faltered he, "will it be safe for me to speak quite frankly?"²⁴ "Tell me everything," answered the Raja. "You have nothing to fear." "Well, Your Majesty," he replied, "yesterday, as you know, it was our turn. We were sitting, looking at one another, weeping, and debating who should go, when a stranger came to the house, and asked for a night's lodging. Presently, seeing we were in great trouble, he asked, 'What's the matter?' I was unwilling to answer, but, at last, on his pressing me very hard, I told him the whole story. Forthwith, he said, 'Don't you distress yourselves. I'll go.' I protested that I couldn't think of permitting such a thing. The idea of saving one's own skin by sending one's guest to be devoured by a Raqhōshī! But he would take no denial. He asked me for a big rope and some other things, and went off with them. That's positively all I know. This morning, I hear that the Raqhōshī's dead. Whether that story's true or not, I can't say."

Hearing this, the Raja said, "Then there's nothing for it but to go ourselves, and inspect the Raqhōshī's house." With these words, he got up and set off at once, accompanied by the Chief Minister and the other officials of the court. On entering the house,

²⁴ See No. XVIII, p. 150.

they found the young man lying fast asleep. The Raja had him awakened, and asked, "Who are you? Is it you who have killed the Raqhōshí?" "Yes, Your Majesty," he replied, "I have killed her," and produced the tongue. Then he told who he was and where he had come from. The Raja was immensely pleased. Embracing the young fellow most cordially, he said, "You've conferred an unspeakable benefit upon me. That Raqhōshí had all but completely ruined my kingdom.²⁵ You have saved it from utter destruction. Now, I had promised that the slayer of the Raqhōshí should be rewarded with my daughter's hand and the half of my kingdom. I'm delighted to bestow both upon you. You have well earned them." The Minister's son accepted His Majesty's gifts with many expressions of gratitude, and returned with him to the palace. There he was splendidly entertained, and preparations were at once set on foot for his marriage with the Princess, which was shortly celebrated with great magnificence. The Raja, who had no other children, looked upon his only daughter's husband as his own son, and, being now an old man, rejoiced to have found one so competent to relieve him of the burden of state affairs.

The Minister's son spent some time very happily in the society of his lovely bride, but, as day after day went by without his getting any news of his friend, the Prince, he began to worry about him more and more, and often sat for hours by himself, wondering anxiously what had become of him. One day,

²⁵ The second Raqhosh mentioned in this tale, is said to have cleared out a whole kingdom, excepting one girl. Cf. LDB, pp. 81 f. and 271. Similar cases are mentioned in KSS.

the Princess, coming into his room and finding him thus, asked him what was wrong. "Oh, nothing at all," said he, and did his best to put on an appearance of cheerfulness. But she was not to be put off. "There must be something," she said. "I'm your wife. Tell me what it is." "Well," he replied, "I've nothing to complain of here. Since my marriage with you, I've had every reason to be happy. But, consider. It's a long time since I left home. I don't know what may have befallen my old father and mother. And I'm still more uneasy about the Prince, the dearest friend I have. We set out on our adventures at the same time, but, from that day to this, I've not heard one word of news about him." "Oh, if that's all that troubles you," replied his wife, "it can soon be put right. I'll speak to my father to-morrow, and he'll send out messengers to your home and in quest of the Prince. We shall soon know all about them." "No," said he. "That'll be of no use. I must go myself." "Well," was the reply, "if you think so—and, of course, you know best—then take me along with you. In that case, you may go as soon as you like." "No," he said. "I'm sorry that's quite impossible. You must stay here, while I go to seek for the Prince. When I have found him, I will return and take you with me to my home." "What!" replied the Princess, greatly surprised and grieved. "I remain here alone, while you go wandering, nobody knows where! That cannot be!" "I shan't be long away," said her husband. "Have patience for just a short time. I'll soon be back for you." The Princess reluctantly gave her assent. "Well, do

as you think you must," she said, " but don't be long in returning." Her husband solemnly promised her he would not. Then, bidding her good-bye, he went to the old Raja, and begged his permission to be absent from the court for a while, explaining to him the necessity of his proposed journey in the same way as he had done to his wife. His aged father-in-law was greatly distressed, and, embracing him fervently, said with tears, " My dear fellow, you mustn't think of such a thing ! You know that I have no sons of my own ; but I have been consoled for the want of such by your marriage with my daughter. Moreover, finding you so competent to act for me, I have obtained relief in my old age from the burden of state affairs. If you leave me now, how in the world am I to get on without you ? " The Minister's son, however, insisted that his going was absolutely necessary. The Raja reluctantly gave his consent, but urged him to wait a few days, till arrangements could be made for sending his wife along with him. The young man declared that he must leave his wife in her father's care while he went alone in search of the Prince, as her accompanying him on such a quest would only hamper him and endanger the lives of both. Finally, the Raja had to agree to this part of his plan also, and content himself with his son-in-law's promise that he would not be away an hour longer than he could help.

The Minister's son now saluted his father-in-law respectfully, and rode away. Stopping only to rest at night, he traversed one kingdom after another, till, at length, late one afternoon, he found himself in a very dense forest. He saw there was no hope

of his being able to reach the other side of it before nightfall. Yet he didn't like the thought of passing the night in it, as it seemed to be full of beasts of prey. He could hear quite plainly the growling of the tigers and bears. However, there being no help for it, he dismounted, tied his horse at the foot of a huge tree, and, climbing up, himself, settled to rest as comfortably as he could among some lofty branches. Towards midnight, he was aroused all at once by the rushing and roaring of a tremendous wind ²⁶ from the south, before which even the hugest trees bent and cracked, and seemed as if they might any moment be uprooted. He wasn't long left in doubt as to the cause of the hurricane, for, soon, an enormous Raqhosh appeared. He was so horrible to look at that even the Minister's son, brave though he was, felt frightened, and cowered among the branches of the tree in order to hide himself as completely as possible.

The Raqhosh sat down at the tree-foot and rested for a while, then, getting up, stamped twice with his foot upon the ground there. Instantaneously, a huge stone moved away, leaving open a passage underground,²⁷ into which the Raqhosh descended. Presently, he came up again, bringing with him a monkey.

²⁶ Cf. LDB, pp. 82 and 252. Similarly, in 'The Demon and the King's Son,' a great rushing wind came blowing from the demon when he saw the Prince—SIF, p. 185, with Note 2 on pp. 290 f. In 'Vasilissa the Fair,' a terrible roaring in the forest, crackling of branches, and rustling of leaves, heralds the approach of the Baba Yaga—RRT, p. 153. In 'The Soldier's Midnight Watch,' a great blast of wind comes before the dead witch's coffin opens and she rises—*ib.*, pp. 276 f. Cf. KSS, I, p. 411, and II, p. 446; RRT, pp. 88 and 162.

²⁷ Cf. GHT, II, p. 257. 'Strong Hans' finds the chained Prin-

He then plucked a few leaves from the tree on which the Minister's son was sitting, drew some water from a well close by, threw the leaves into it, and poured it over the body of the monkey. The monkey was immediately transformed into a beautiful young woman,²⁸ with whom the Raqhosh descended again by the underground passage. Towards dawn, the two came up again. This time, the Raqhosh plucked some leaves from another tree and threw them into some water from another well, and then poured it over the young woman. Instantaneously, she was changed into a monkey again, with which the Raqhosh descended once more underground, and, presently, returning alone, replaced the stone, and went away.

The Minister's son had watched very carefully

cess inside a door at the bottom of a hole in a rock. Also, *ib.*, II, p. 240—the Tailor enters through an iron door into a hole inside a rock, and steps on a stone which sinks down with him into another hole, where he finds the enchanted maiden in the glass coffin

²⁸ Transformation and re-transformation of a demon's captive in circumstances like the above, occur less frequently in Indian Folk-tales than the use of magic rods to attain the same ends. In 'Brave Hirálálbásá,' the Rākshasa paralyses the Sonahrí Rání by laying a stick at her feet, and restores to her the power of moving by putting it at her head—SIF, p. 54. Cf. KKT, p. 199. In 'The Demon and the King's Son,' two sticks are used, and the different effects are produced by changing their places—SIF, p. 186, with Note 4 on pp. 261 f. Silver and gold sticks are used for withdrawing and restoring life in LDB, pp. 81 f. and 251 f. On pp. 224 f., they actually separate and rejoin the head and trunk of the captive. With the two kinds of leaves, cf. the two kinds of cabbage—'Donkey Cabbages,' GHT, II, pp. 143 ff.—one of which transforms a man into an ass and the other reverses the enchantment, and, with the two kinds of water, the two lakes mentioned in the romance of Hatim Tai, the water of one of which turns things into silver and that of the other restores them to their original state—CLER, p. 471; cf. CLP, I, p. 447. See also CLER, p. 495; MCF, pp. 85 and 205 ff.

everything that took place. As soon as it was daylight, he climbed down from the tree, gathered some leaves from the two trees, and then kicked the spot of ground at the tree-foot twice, in the same way as the Raqhosh had done. Immediately, the stone moved away, and the Minister's son saw that there was a well-built stairway, leading right down under the earth. He began to descend by it, and, presently, found himself in front of a magnificent palace, which he entered, and roamed about all through it, but could see no trace of any inhabitants. The only living thing he found, was the monkey he had seen the night before. This he came upon at last, chained up in one of the rooms. He immediately ascended above-ground again, and came back with some water from the first well. Throwing some of the leaves which the Raqhosh had first used, into the water, he poured it over the monkey, which, as before, was at once transformed into a beautiful woman. She started violently at sight of the young man, and asked, "Who are you, and how did you find your way here?" "I'll tell you all that afterwards," he replied. "Do you first tell me about yourself." "Well," said she, "I'm the daughter of the Raja of this country. The forest above was formerly his kingdom. That Raqhosh has devoured my father and his household and all his subjects, sparing only me, whom he changed into a monkey and shut up in this house, which was a secret palace of my father's.²⁹ Every night he visits me, when he transforms me again into a woman. Before he departs,

²⁹ Probably, a later interpolation in the tale, by way of accounting for the existence of a subterranean dwelling. Yet ancient

he changes me back into a monkey. If he finds you here, he is certain to devour you. Oh, why did you come here only to meet your death?" "Don't be anxious on that account," he replied. "But tell me, why has the Raqhosh spared your life?" "Oh, he wished to marry me,"³⁰ answered she. "When I absolutely refused to consent, he was on the point of ravishing me by force. Seeing this, and having no other resource, I was compelled to deceive him by dissembling."³¹ 'Listen,' I said to him. 'Use no

Indian kings may have had such secret houses, intended to be used as refuges in time of need. Cf. the robber's underground palace in KSS, II, p. 494, and the robber's underground chamber in the story of Shah Manssur, CLER, p. 37. Secret treasure-chambers, they, doubtless, did have. At least, B. C. Chatterji considered the existence of such probable enough to form the basis of his novel, 'Devī Choudhurāṇī.' Big Hindu houses are said still to contain "chor-kamras"—thief-rooms—where the inmates may hide, should dacoits make an attack—as Hōridash, the hero of 'Guptō Kōtha,' does—to escape being tortured till they reveal where their valuables are concealed. A "Sulking-chamber," too, is a convenience which a European architect does not think of providing—though he might with advantage—but which certainly must have existed in old-fashioned Hindu houses. See No. XXVII, Note 2.

Subterranean palaces frequently figure in both Eastern and Western tales, but they usually belong to other than ordinary human beings. *E.g.*, King Cardiddu's is really a prison in which he is confined by a sort of ogress, and Ohimé, who dwells in one inside a rock, is a half-demon Bluebeard—GOS, I, pp. 93 and 140. Those of the KSS are the abodes of Asuras, Rākshasas, and the like. But, in 'The Princess Hidden under the Ground,' an ordinary human king builds a subterranean palace to which he consigns his daughter, kills the architect to keep its situation a secret, and then offers his daughter to the finder—HGA, I, p. 124.

³⁰ The reason for which Punchkin spared Balna when he petrified her husband and his six brothers—FOD, pp. 13 ff.

³¹ Balna fools Punchkin with the same vain hope, and so gets him to reveal his life-secret—FOD, p. 14.

violence to me. Who else is there but you whom I can hope ever to get as a husband? My only reason for till now refusing your suit, was my desire to learn your real feelings towards me. You are my all!’ ‘Very good,’ replied he, with a smile. ‘I’ve certainly misunderstood you all this time. However, if, as you say, you love me, marry me now.’ ‘When you have waited so long,’ I answered, ‘be patient for just one year more.’³² I’m in the middle of a course of religious austerities.³³ Once I have completed it, I will marry you.’ I succeeded, but with great difficulty, in persuading him to agree to this, and, since then, I have had to make a great show of love for him to keep him from losing patience. In this way, I’ve been able to throw dust in his eyes for so long. But the year is now near an end.” The Princess could say no more. She began to weep bitterly. The young man was silent for a few minutes. Then he said, “Fair lady, I will destroy the Raqhosh. Have no fear about that.”

The two ate together and, afterwards, they married

³² This is felt to be a really strong argument by a Hindu. It does not appeal so forcibly to a European.

³³ The usual pretext put forward by a woman to get her marriage delayed, in Indian Folk-tales. Cf. LDB, pp. 29, 90, and 217. The Prince’s wife in ‘Phakir Chand,’ Champa Dal’s wife, and ‘the lady of peerless beauty’ stave off marriages that are being forced on them—the first for twelve, the last two for six months—by alleging they have taken a vow—Sk., *vrata*—i.e., begun a course of religious observances which it will require a certain fixed time to complete, and which, when once begun, must, at all costs, be completed. Cf. KKT, p. 136; CLP, I, p. 344. The Queen in ‘True Friendship’ demands two years’ delay, and Zuhra Khotan, six months, simply alleging the true reason—viz., to give their actual husbands a chance to turn up. KKT, pp. 156 and 184. Manahsvāmin, in his female form, agrees to marry on condition that the husband spend six

one another.³⁴ Towards evening, the Princess said to the Minister's son, "It is not safe for you to remain here any longer. At the back of the house, there is a heap of flowers. Hide yourself under it." He agreed to do so, and asked, "When does the Raqhosh go to sleep?" The Princess answered, "When he comes, he first converses with me for a while, and then goes to sleep." Having ascertained this, the Minister's son changed the Princess back into a monkey in the same way as the Raqhosh had done, and hid himself under the heap of flowers.³⁵

At nightfall, the Raqhosh turned up as usual, re-transformed the monkey into a woman, and, after amusing himself with her for a while, fell asleep. Seeing this, the Princess let the Minister's son know by a pre-arranged signal. He crept out from under the flowers, took some of the leaves and water the Raqhosh used for changing the Princess into a monkey, and poured the mixture on the monster's own body. Instantaneously, he was transformed into a huge ape. The young man fastened up the ape securely with all the chains he could find in the palace, and then shut him inside a cage which he made for him.³⁶ The Princess and he then

months in visiting holy bathing-places before treating him—or her—as a wife—KSS, II, p. 305. Keeping the impatient party employed seems sensible.

³⁴ Presumably, by the so-called *Gandharva* rite, viz., exchange of garlands, by which Dushyanta married Sakuntalā. On Polygamy in Indian Folk-tales, see Appendix, Note 9.

³⁵ In like circumstances, Champa Dal hides under a heap of sacred trefoil, and the 'Boy with a Moon on his Forehead,' under a pile of *Kataki* flowers—LDB, pp. 82, 84, and 252. 'The Shipwrecked Prince' is stowed away in a box—KKT, p. 379.

³⁶ Presumably, the Rākshasa had a "separable" life—see MCF,

ascended above-ground, and, seating her with him on his own horse, he rode on till he got clear of the forest.

The two continued their journey for several days, traversing one kingdom after another, till, at last, they arrived in a country, with the appearance of which the Princess was greatly delighted. Her husband, accordingly, hired a house, so that they might stay there for a while. He now began to spend a great part of his time in roaming about, looking for his lost friend, the Prince, but, for long, could find no trace of him. At last, one day, he saw a young man, not a bit like a coolie, carrying two pots of water, slung from a bamboo across his shoulder. On looking well at him, he saw that it was the Prince, himself. But he was scarcely recognizable. He had lost all his good looks, and was reduced to mere skin and bone. The Minister's son could hardly believe his eyes, but, when he went up to him, and inspected him closely, he could no longer doubt the miserable-looking creature was, indeed, his bosom friend. He asked him, "Do you recognize me? What has brought you to this?" At the sight of his comrade from whom he had been parted so long, the Prince at first could do nothing but weep. Then he told him the whole story of his adventure, which had ended so unhappily. As he listened, the Minister's son was so strongly affected

pp. 120 ff., and CLP, I, pp. 347 ff.—and, therefore, could not be killed out of hand. Cf. LDB, pp. 85 f., 253 ff.; KKT, pp. 383 f.; also, SIF, pp. 173 ff. The two men who find the demon in the shape of a goat, can only tie him up to a tree. His life is in a *maina*—jay—which has to be got a hold of, before the demon can be killed.

that he could not help shedding tears of sympathy with his unfortunate friend. When they had composed themselves, the Minister's son said, "Don't despair, brother. I'm sure I can put things right. Now, tell me; do you know for certain that the water you carry in, is used for the Princess's bath?" "Yes," replied the Prince, "there's no doubt of that." "Then meet me here to-morrow, when you go to draw water. I will be waiting for you, and will tell you what you must do," said his friend. The Prince was greatly encouraged by his words, and declared he would never be able to repay his kindness. "A week or two more of the kind of life I'm leading, would be the death of me," he added. The Minister's son, again urging him not to lose heart, and assuring him of speedy deliverance, bade him good-bye and, mounting his horse, rode away to the forest. There he picked some leaves from each of the two magical trees and drew some water from each of the two magical wells, and returned with all possible speed.

Next morning, when the Prince went to draw water for the Princess's bath, his friend again met him, and, giving him some of the leaves from one of the trees and some of the water from one of the wells, said, "To-day, when the Princess is being bathed, you must somehow contrive that this water, with these leaves in it, be poured upon her body. Let me hear to-morrow what is the result. I shall know what to do next." The Prince took the water and the leaves, promising to do as his friend directed. And, when the Princess was getting her bath, he did manage stealthily to pour the magical water and

leaves over her.³⁷ Instantaneously, she was transformed into a monkey, and began jumping about all over the place.

When the Raja was informed of this terrible calamity, he was overwhelmed with grief, for the Princess was his only child. All the most famous physicians of every kind were summoned from his own and the neighbouring kingdoms, but nothing they could do, was of the slightest use. At last, the Raja, in despair, issued a proclamation by beat of drum, that whoever should succeed in disenchanting his daughter, should receive her in marriage along with the half of his kingdom.

Meanwhile, the Prince had sought out his friend and told him what had happened. After all the great physicians had failed to effect a cure, and the Raja's proclamation had been made in every quarter of the city, the Minister's son said to the Prince, "You go to the Raja and declare that you can restore the Princess to her proper shape." "But how shall I be able actually to do it?" asked the Prince. "Oh, you needn't bother your head about that," replied his friend. "That's my affair. You go to the Raja, and offer to effect a cure. Then come and tell me what he says. I'll see to the rest." The Prince went off to the palace, and, having gained admission

³⁷ Not at all inconceivable. Bathing does not imply nudity. Men and women bathe together in the present day at the public ghats. The narrative is true to common life, and to the life of times when the only king was the village headman. Of course, it is not true to the high life of historical or modern times. With the menial occupation of the Prince, cf. that in which the tutor, Katoma, in 'The Blind Man and the Cripple'—K. plays the same rôle as the Minister's son—finds his Prince Ivan engaged, *viz.*, herding Princess Anna the Fair's cows—RRT, p. 251.

to the royal presence, said, "Mōharaj, I can cure the Princess." The Raja was overjoyed to know there was any hope of his daughter's deliverance, and asked, "Who are you?" "I'm one of the Princess's prisoners," was the reply. "Very well," said the Raja, "if you succeed in doing as you say, I will give you the Princess in marriage and half the kingdom besides." Having received this promise from the Raja, the Prince came back and told his friend. The latter then gave him some of the other water and leaves, and said, "Throw these leaves into this water, and pour it over the Princess. She will immediately regain her human form."³⁸ The Prince returned to the palace and asked the Raja to have the Princess brought, as he had made all his preparations for disenchanting her. The Raja gave the order. His attendants, with great difficulty, managed to catch the monkey, and, fastening a chain round its neck, dragged it away to the Raja. By the Prince's request, it was taken into a private chamber, and he was left alone with it. He then poured the water with the leaves over it, and it was instantly re-transformed into a beautiful maiden. He called in the attendants and sent word to the Raja, who came running to the spot, and could hardly contain himself for joy, when he saw that his daughter was herself again. The news that the Princess had been disenchanted, spread rapidly

³⁸ With the trick played here, cf. the compact made between the snake and the prisoner, that the former should twine himself about the Raja and release him only by the man's command—KSS, II, pp. 103 ff.—and that made by the imp with the peasant, that he should obsess people and make them crazy and ill, and quit them only when the latter was called in to treat them—PRT, pp. 40 f.

through the whole kingdom, and everywhere there was great rejoicing. An auspicious day was at once ascertained, and the Raja celebrated the marriage of his daughter to the Prince with great magnificence. After a time, the Prince became anxious to return to his own country. At first, his father-in-law was most unwilling to let him go, but at last consented, and set about making preparations for sending his daughter to her husband's home in a style suitable to her rank.

Meanwhile, the Minister's son, rejoicing that he had succeeded in rescuing his friend, returned, as he had promised, to his father-in-law's city to fetch his other wife. He soon came back with her, and then he and the Prince, with their wives, set off for their own country. When they reached it, they were welcomed with universal rejoicings.

They continued to be as fast friends as ever, and as fond of each other's society. One day, when they were sitting together, the Minister's son said, with a smile, to the Prince, "Well, brother, what's your opinion now? Which is best—learning or mother-wit?" The Prince looked rather put out, and made no reply.

XXVII.

THE KOTWAL'S DAUGHTER.

THE Raja of a certain country had one son and no other children. As an only child and sole heir of his kingdom and wealth, the youth was greatly beloved by his father. One day, the Prince with his attendants went out to walk. On their way, they passed a house, upon the roof of which a maiden sat, drying her hair.¹ The Prince saw her, but said nothing to anybody at the time. As soon as he got home, however, he went off and shut himself up in the Sulking-chamber.² Not seeing his son anywhere, the Raja began to search for him in all

¹ This is a favourite incident in Hindu tales. The Indrásan Raja gets his first view of the Phulmatí Rání when she is having her hair combed in her verandah—SIF, p. 2. Cf. *ib.*, p. 110.

² In 'The Origin of Rubies,' the Princess, when in a pet because she has not got a second large ruby, shuts herself up in the "grief-chamber," as Mr. Day renders the word—LDB, p. 223. See, also, CAS, p. 68. In 'The Raja's Son and the Princess Labám,' the Prince, after hearing about the Princess Labám, takes to his bed for four or five days—SIF, p. 154. On seeing the Pánwpatti Rání, the Prince takes to his bed for a couple of days—his being a milder attack, apparently. *ib.*, p. 209. Cf. KSS, I, p. 119. Seclusion of women among Hindus must have been highly desirable in the interests of the public health. But even Western Folk-tale heroes are in the way of being "taken bad" when they first fall in love. *E.g.*, after getting a glimpse of the 'Goat-Maiden,' without her detachable skin, the Prince refuses his victuals for five days on end, much to his sensible old mother's concern—HGA, I, pp. 127 f.

directions, but could find no sign of him. The Rání, thinking he was lost, sat in her room, weeping bitterly. At last, one of the servants, noticing that the door of the Sulking-chamber was closed from within, came and reported this to the Raja. He at once hurried thither, and called again and again to his son to open the door. But neither commands nor entreaties could induce him to do so. Then the Rání came; and, after she had called many times to her son and implored him to open the door, he, at last, did so, and came out. His mother took him in her lap, and asked, "Child, what ails you? Why did you go and lie down in the Sulking-chamber? If it was because you want something, tell us what it is, and it shall be got for you at once." The Prince told her the whole story. Having heard it, the Rání first of all made him eat something, and then went off to the Raja. As soon as she saw him, she cried out, "Mōharaj, have you no sense at all? Don't you see that our son is now old enough to be married? And yet you never so much as mention such a thing. One would think he was a child of only five or six. Remember he's your only child; so make up your mind what's best to be done." The Raja answered, "There's no need for your exciting yourself on that account. I'll send off messengers in all directions this moment. They'll soon find some beautiful girl, whom I'll cause to be brought here and marry her to our son without delay." The Rání said, "No, no, Mōharaj, that won't do. The Prince has just seen a beautiful maiden in this very village. He must marry her, and nobody else." The Raja answered, "That's easily enough done."

So saying, he came out, and asked his attendants, "Whose daughter was it that my son saw upon the roof?" They went off to inquire, and very soon returned and said, "He is one of your own officers. The Kotwal's daughter was upon the roof of her house at the time the Prince was out walking. It must have been she that he saw."

Hearing this, the Raja ordered the Kotwal to be summoned to his presence. Very soon, he appeared and made his obeisance to the Raja. The Raja said to him, "Kotwal, my son must marry your daughter." The Kotwal answered, "Mōharaj, what better fortune could I have than that my daughter should be the Prince's wife? But I cannot promise without asking herself, for she is not subject to me." The Raja said, "Very well, go and ask her, but be quick about it, and come and tell me her answer." The Kotwal went home, and told his daughter the Raja's message. She answered, "What! you know very well, father, that I never see the face of any man; how then can I marry anyone?"³ The Kotwal said,

³ That a girl of marriageable age, as the Kotwal's daughter apparently was, should be unmarried, is, from the point of view of Hindu social rules, something quite abnormal, in fact, impossible. A Hindu girl *must* be married *before* she attains nubile age—in Bengal, from twelve to thirteen—otherwise it is very difficult to get anyone to take her on any terms, and her family is disgraced. But I never heard of her own choice of a husband being allowed to a girl who had reached the age of eight—CLER, Note on p. 37—or, for that matter, any age. Hindu Folk-tales explain those abnormal cases by the fact that the girl is really not an ordinary human being. *E.g.*, Somaprabhā is unwilling to marry, and consents to do so only on practically the same condition as our heroine insists on, *viz.*, that, her husband shall not treat her as a wife. She is a heavenly nymph—KSS, I. pp. 119 ff. Cf. *ib.*, I, pp. 194 f., 222, and 225. Kanakarekshā will marry only a Brahman or a

“My dear, if you don’t marry the Prince, the Raja is sure to be terribly angry. And, in his rage, he’ll likely enough have us all put to death.” Still she refused, saying, “No, father, I won’t marry him.”⁴

Accordingly, the Kotwal had to go away back and say to the Raja, “Mōharaj, my daughter does not wish to marry at all. She never sees the face of any other man but myself.” The Raja answered, “I’ll hear no such excuses. If you won’t give your daughter in marriage to my son, then I will kill you, and your whole family along with you.” In great alarm and astonishment, the Kotwal asked, “Mōharaj, what crime have I committed?” “Not another word!” retorted the Raja. “Go and tell your daughter what I have said.” The Kotwal sorrowfully returned to his house and told his wife the whole story. Terror-stricken, she hurried to her daughter, and said to her reproachfully, “My dear child, you will be the ruin of us all. If you don’t consent to marry the Prince, the Raja is to have the whole family of us put to death immediately.” Her father, also, came, and, with many

Kshatriya who has seen the Golden City. This is because she is really a Vidyādhari under a curse, which, by the agency of Śaktideva, is brought to an end. The Kotwal’s daughter, as we shall see, was one of Indra’s celestial dancers, and, probably, apprehended that her marrying a mortal would bring her into trouble with her master—as actually happened in Bakāwali’s case. See Note 18. Such marriages, however, between men and females of a higher order are very frequent in the KSS.

⁴ From the point of view of a Hindu, refractoriness on the part of either son or daughter with regard to matrimonial arrangements proposed by their parents, is simply not to be tolerated. A selection of cases in which children are subjected to curses for such recalcitrance, will be found in KSS, I, pp. 497-514.

tears, begged her to yield. At length, unable to resist their entreaties any longer, she said, "Father, I will marry him, if his people will agree to certain conditions." "What conditions?" asked the Kotwal. "These," she replied: "during the ceremony of my marriage, and after it, I must be blindfolded with a cloth wrapped seven times round my face and head. Moreover, I will stay in the palace only during the day-time, and must be allowed to return home every evening. If, after my marriage, they try to force me to do otherwise, I will forthwith kill myself by cutting my throat."

The Kotwal returned to the palace and informed the Raja about what his daughter had said. The Prince, on his father's asking him, at once declared that he was willing to agree to the maiden's conditions. Soon after, an auspicious day having been ascertained, the marriage was celebrated with great splendour. The Raja feasted all and sundry, and, on all sides, from one end of the city to the other, the joyful sound of musical instruments and shouting crowds could be heard. When evening drew on, according to custom, a great assemblage gathered in the palace, and, presently, the Kotwal's daughter arrived, her face being bound with a seven-fold cloth. The marriage ceremony was now performed, and, when it was over, the bride returned to her father's house. Thus she continued to do every day. In the morning, she came in her palki to the palace, and, before night-fall, returned to her home.

Although it was no more than he had agreed to, the Prince soon began to find this sort of thing very tiresome. His wife sat all day with the cloth over

her eyes, never for a moment removing it, and, during the night, would not remain with him at all. “What’s the use of this marriage to me?”⁵ said he to himself. “However, let me see what I can do. Surely, it won’t beat me to master one weak woman.” Exhorting himself thus not to lose hope, the Prince left the palace and travelled on till he came to a great forest. He continued making his way, though with great difficulty, through the thick jungle, when, presently, he caught sight of a little hut, near which a Muni was practising austerities. The Prince resolved to stay there. Every morning he rose very early, cleaned and tidied up the Muni’s hut, and gathered from the forest and set before him the various things he needed for his ascetic observances.⁶ But he stood in too great awe of the holy man to venture to speak to him. Indeed, he carefully kept out of his sight. Thus the Muni found his hut cleaned daily, and all the requisites for his performance of *pūjā* laid ready to his hand, but could not see who it was that did him all these services. At length, one day, he said aloud, “Whoever it is that has been ministering to me, let him present himself before me, and I will confer a boon upon him.” When he heard the Muni say this, the Prince at once came forward,

⁵ Guhachandra’s conclusion, in similar circumstances, was, “The goddess of death has entered my house as a wife.” An aged Brahman, however, gave him a charm, which, applied along with an artifice which provoked the wife’s jealousy, cured her aversion, very much as the grass—impregnated with arsenic—killed the sheep—KSS, I, pp. 120 and 122.

⁶ In ‘The Bēl-Princess,’ the Prince gains the favour of the Fakir in the same way—SIF, p. 138. Cf. *ib.*, p. 167; CLER, p. 155; GOS, I, pp. 23 f. See, also, XXVI, Note 4. Jhore makes friends of the buffaloes in much the same fashion—CAS, p. 112.

and, making a humble obeisance, stood before him, with his cloth over his neck and shoulders. The Muni, looking at him, said, "Prince, by my magic power, I have come to know all about you. It's because you can't master your wife that you've come here. Well, take these pills. When you swallow one of them, you will become invisible,⁷ yet will remain able, yourself, to see everything and everybody. In this way, you will be able to accomplish your purpose." Saying this, he handed some pills to the young man, who gratefully received them, bowed humbly to the Muni, and made his way back to the palace.

When he got home, he called one of his servants and said to him, "To-morrow, when the Kotwal's daughter comes, I shall be asleep in my room. You must awaken me. I will then abuse you heartily. Don't be vexed at this, but merely ask, 'Sir, why do you abuse me?' I shall then reply, 'I was having such an interesting dream. Why did you interrupt it by calling me?' Whereupon you will ask me to tell you the dream." The servant promised to carry out the Prince's orders carefully.

Before nightfall, the Kotwal's daughter got into her palki to go home. The Prince, swallowing one

⁷ So the Sonahrí Rání gives 'Brave Híralálbásá' a feather which, when held straight, makes him invisible—SIF, p. 59. In 'The Bél-Princess,' the Fakír gives the Prince some earth to be blown away from the palm of the hand, upon which the same result follows—*ib.*, p. 139 f. Hera Bai gives Seventee Bai a ring which renders her invisible—FOD, p. 42. Cf. the ring of Gyges—Plato, 'Rep.' 10. A cap or a cloak is the most usual means of attaining this end. See GHT, II, pp. 32 and 38; HGA, I, p. 136; MCF, pp. 221 f.; CLP, I, p. 109; Keightley's 'Fairy Mythology,' *passim*, and, specially, Von Leyen, 'Deutsches Sagenbuch,' IV, p. 139.

of the pills, went on before her and her attendants and waited for them at the door of the house. As soon as she arrived, the girl got out of the palki and went straight upstairs to her own room. The Prince slipped up close behind her. Two maids then came, rubbed her with oil and bathed her, and she sat down to do *pūjā*. The Prince was almost stupefied at the sight of her extraordinary beauty, which he now for the first time got a good view of. While she was busy doing *pūjā*, he moved noiselessly about the room and carefully noted everything that was in it. Her *pūjā* done, the girl sat down to have her supper. Having seen this much, the Prince returned to the palace and lay down to rest.

Next morning, as soon as the Kotwal's daughter appeared, the Prince's servant awoke his master. He rose in a great passion and called the man everything that was bad, for disturbing him. "Sir," said the servant in an injured tone, "why do you abuse me? What fault have I committed?" "Oh," replied the Prince, "I was having such a curious dream. Why did you disturb me?" "What did you see in your dream?" inquired the servant. "Listen. I shall tell you," answered the Prince. "I saw in my dream that, yesterday, I went along with the Kotwal's daughter to her father's house. She got down from her palki at the door and went straight upstairs, I following. As soon as she entered her room, two maids came and rubbed her with oil and bathed her. She then sat down to do *pūjā*. While she was so engaged, I looked all about the room and saw such-and-such a thing in one place and such-and-such a thing in another place"—

describing every article in the room and whereabouts it stood. "When her *pūjā* was finished, she sat down to eat. At this point you awoke me, confound you! Otherwise, I don't know what all I might have seen."

The Kotwal's daughter overheard the whole of this conversation, and thought to herself in great astonishment, "What's the meaning of this? Nobody belonging to the palace went home with me yesterday. Yet all he says, is perfectly correct. Can all this be merely a dream? Perhaps. Anyhow, I shall keep a sharp look-out to-day."

Towards nightfall, she went home as usual. But the Prince, having swallowed another pill, again hurried on before her. As soon as she got to the door—where, as before, the invisible Prince was waiting for her—she asked her attendants, "Was any stranger in my room last night?" "What do you mean?" they replied, greatly astonished. "How in the world could any stranger obtain admittance to your room?" "Well," said she, "be that as it may. To-night you must take the greatest possible care that nobody gets in." She then went upstairs, followed by the Prince, and, after her bath, sat down to do *pūjā*. While she was thus employed, the Prince lifted the cover and ate some of the light repast set there for her to take before supper.⁸ Her *pūjā* finished, the girl sat down to partake of a little refreshment. As soon as she removed the cover,

⁸ This light refreshment, partaken of some time before the "square meal," figures in several tales that were narrated to me. Its necessity in real life is due to the extreme irregularity, in point of time, of the "regular" meals in a Bengali household.

she saw that someone had eaten part of the food. Immediately, she called her attendants, and asked, "Who has been eating my food?" "How can we tell?" was the reply. "We set everything for you to-day exactly as we do every day." The Kotwal's daughter said nothing more, but, leaving untasted the things that had been meddled with, proceeded to eat her rice at once. Leaving her so engaged, the Prince returned to the palace.

Next morning, the Kotwal's daughter went as usual to the Raja's, and the Prince's servant forthwith awoke his master as he had done the day before. Precisely the same scene was enacted over again. The Prince recounted to his man, as if seen in a dream, all that he had witnessed and done the night before, describing particularly how he saw himself eat some of the Princess's sweatmeats, and all that she said and did in consequence. Overhearing all this, the girl was utterly dumbfounded. "What mystery is this?" said she to herself. "Assuredly, the sweetmeats were eaten yesterday, and I did caution my servants in the very words he has repeated. Does the Prince dream all this, or does he ascertain somehow what actually happens? Anyhow, to-day, I will take care to be too vigilant for anything to escape me."

Accordingly, when she reached home that evening, as soon as she entered the house, she ordered the door to be shut. But the Prince was already inside, and followed her upstairs. On this occasion, while the girl was busy with her *pūjā*, he ate up not only all the sweetmeats, but the whole of the rice and curry, which had been served up in a golden plate

and bowl. Then he chewed all her betel, and, finally, taking up her hookah, sat down on the bed and began to smoke. Her worship over, the girl went to eat her sweets, but, on removing the cover, saw there was nothing. She at once called her servants and began to scold them. They declared they knew nothing about it; indeed, couldn't understand what she was talking about. The sweetmeats were there as usual when she entered the room, and nobody but herself had been near the place since then. In a very bad temper, she sat down to have her rice and curry. But, when she lifted the cover, there was nothing to be seen but the empty dishes. At this, she became angrier than ever. But what could she do? Having to go supperless, she thought she would have some betel at least, but, when she opened the betel-holder, it was empty. Not a single piece remained! This was too much for the girl, and she broke out upon her servants again. The Prince came away, leaving her scolding them for all she was worth.

Next morning, when the Kotwal's daughter came to the palace, his servant awoke the Prince, and the same sort of conversation as on the two previous mornings took place between master and man. The Prince described with the most minute accuracy—though calling it a dream—all that had taken place from the time the Kotwal's daughter arrived at her own door the night before, up to the time when he left her storming at her servants. He spoke in such tones that she could not help overhearing all that he said. She listened in utter bewilderment. "How is all this possible?" she said to herself. "Is the Prince a man or is he a god? He is no

ordinary person, assuredly. Anyhow, I must not do anything till I know a little better what's what. Let me wait a day or two longer and see what happens."

That day, again, the Prince went along with her when she returned home at nightfall, and followed her upstairs, unseen. This time the Prince did not eat quite all the sweetmeats, rice and curry, and betel. He left a little of each, which the girl was glad to eat rather than again go without any supper at all. Soon after she had finished, three young women came into the room, and said to her, "Nṛit'ōkálí, will you not go with us to-night?" "Yes," answered Nṛit'ōkálí, "I will go." Saying this, she dressed herself and went away out with them, the Prince following. Having reached the garden, they all four climbed up a tree, and then one of them snapped her fingers three times.⁹ Instantly, the tree moved off through the air.¹⁰ Seeing this, the Prince went away back to the palace.

Next morning, on Nṛit'ōkálí's arriving at the palace, the Prince was awakened by his servant, and the usual dialogue took place between them. The Prince related, as if he had seen it in a dream, all that occurred from the moment the Kotwal's daughter reached home up to the time when the tree conveyed her and her three companions away, mentioning specially how, on that occasion, she actually ate his leavings, and did not scold the servants at all. The Kotwal's daughter overheard every word, and was

⁹ See No. XXIV, Note 5.

¹⁰ On magical means of locomotion, see Appendix, Note 8, and MCF, p. 218.

almost stupefied with amazement. "Assuredly, the Prince can be no mere man," said she to herself. "Hitherto, not a single human being has come to know what we do at night. How has he found out all that? Well, there's nothing for me but to wait a little longer and see whether he learns anything more."

Towards nightfall, she went home, and the Prince accompanied her invisibly. Again he ate most of the food, and she, after bathing and doing *pūjā*, ate what he left. Presently, her three companions came to call her. The Prince slipped away before them to the tree and seated himself among the branches. They soon followed, and, when they had ascended it, one of them snapped her fingers thrice as before, when the tree moved away with extraordinary rapidity, away over the seven oceans and the thirteen rivers, till it reached a beautiful garden. There it stood still, and the four girls descended, the Prince following them. Presently, they came to the place where Indra's ¹¹ Court was assembled. A great company of the celestials was gathered there, amongst whom the Prince sat down, without any one's being able to see him. In a little while, the dancing began, Nṛit'ōkālī and her three companions being the dancers. The musician who played their accompaniment, did his work very badly, so it was impossible for them to dance well. The spectators began to express their dissatisfaction. Now, the Prince was a very skilful musician. Seeing that everything was going wrong on account of the bad playing, he rose and, snatching away the drum

¹¹ See No. XVII, Note 2.

from the accompanist, began to play, himself. His playing was excellent, hence the girls were enabled to dance most beautifully. Indra, himself, was greatly delighted, and bestowed garlands of *Pārijāt*¹² flowers upon them as a reward. They, in turn, proceeded to throw these round the neck of the Court musician, in acknowledgment of his fine playing. But, as they did so, the Prince, unseen, thrust forward his own neck and received all the garlands upon it. The assembly now broke up, and the four girls went back again to the tree and climbed into it, the Prince doing the same. All the way to the tree, Nṛit'ōkālī and her companions were loud in their praises of the Court musician's extraordinarily fine playing that night. The tree, being set in motion as before, passed rapidly back again over the seven oceans and the thirteen rivers till it reached its own place in the Kotwal's garden. The four girls descended from the tree and the Prince followed. The other three went to their homes, Nṛit'ōkālī returned to her own room, and the Prince, to the palace.

Next morning, the girl went to her father-in-law's as usual, and the Prince's servant roused his master. The Prince got up in a downright fury of rage, abusing the man and all his relations for many generations back. "Will you never take a telling?" he cried. "What do you mean by always rousing

¹² Sk., *Pārijāta*, called also Kalpadruma, a tree produced at the churning of the ocean, which granted the wishes of those that propitiated it. It was placed in Svarga, the heaven of Indra, but was carried off by Kṛishṇa, who planted it in his own city of Dvārakā. After his death, it returned to Svarga. See MWR, p. 332. In KSS, I, p. 108, the hermit, Nārada, gives the King of Vatsa a garland of Pārijāta flowers.

me at the very time I most wish to sleep? Such a wonderful dream as I was having when you awoke me, like the blockhead you are! What more might I not have seen, if you had only left me alone!" "You seem to have remarkable dreams every night," replied the man, pretending to be rather sulky. "What might it be that you saw last night?" The Prince, taking care to speak loud enough for the Kotwal's daughter to overhear every word, described, as if it had been a dream, all that took place the night before, till he and the four girls arrived in Indra's festive assembly. "Then," he proceeded, "the Kotwal's daughter and her three companions began to dance. But they were not able to dance well, because the accompanist played very badly. All the people in the assembly were beginning to show themselves much displeased, when I, whom nobody could see, snatched the drum from the Court musician's hand and commenced playing, myself. My playing was far better than his, so much so that the girls were able to dance much more beautifully than they usually did. Indra, himself, was so highly pleased with their dancing that he gave them garlands of *Pārijāt* flowers as a reward. They, in turn, were about to throw these round the neck of the Court musician, when I thrust forward my head and received them on my own neck. If you don't believe me, see, here are the four *Pārijāt* garlands to prove the truth of my story;" and, suiting the action to the word, the Prince produced the garlands from under his pillow.¹³

¹³ With the above incidents, cf. the following. Śrīdarśana is carried off by the Gaṇas—semi-divine beings—to Haṁsadvīpa,

The Kotwal's daughter had overheard all, becoming more and more astonished every moment. When she saw the garlands, she could control herself no longer. Rushing across the room to the Prince, she fell at his feet and cried, "Forgive me. I have committed many faults against you. All this time I have not even spoken to you." "Oh," replied the Prince, "you are a celestial nymph, and I'm just an ordinary man. Why should you deign to have anything to do with the like of me, and how should I presume even to look at you, much less touch you?"

where he meets Anangamanjarī, with whom he exchanges ornaments. He is borne back to his own palace in his sleep, and would have thought the whole adventure a dream, but for the ornament on his wrist—KSS. II, pp. 209 f. In 'The Shoes that were danced to Pieces,' twelve princesses go every night to dance in an underground palace. A soldier, who has received from an old woman a cloak of invisibility, follows them one night, and drinks the wine from the cup of one of them so that it reaches her mouth empty. Next night, he brings away the cup, and, with it and some twigs he has gathered in the subterranean region, accredits his story—GHT, II, p. 179 ff. 'Beslea'—Veckenstedt's 'Mythen, Sagen und Legenden der Zämaiten,' I, pp. 196 ff.—seems to be a very curious variant of the same original. A Princess refuses to marry, alleging that she already has a husband. One night, her father, keeping stealthy watch, sees three men lead her away from her room and drive off with her in an iron chariot with four beautiful horses. After a time, a stranger—a fallen god—comes to the palace and offers to unravel the mystery. Rendering himself invisible, he takes his seat beside the Princess in the iron chariot, and, at three castles where they halt, drinks off the liquor which is brought for his companion. Finally they reach hell, where the Princess's husband, a Dragon who is a devil, welcomes her affectionately. Their offspring, a young devil, is standing by, and the stranger, unperceived, cuts off his tail, causing his death. He returns in the chariot with the Princess, as he had come, without her being aware of it, and, next day, convinces her father and the rest of the truth of his story by producing the amputated tail. In GHT, II, p. 108, the peasant brings back a flail from heaven, and so proves that he has been there.

At this, the girl began to weep bitterly and entreat him piteously to be merciful to her. As the Prince's resentment was for the most part only assumed, he soon relented, and began to treat her as his wife.

When evening came and the Kotwal's daughter went home as usual, the Prince followed her, but without taking one of the magical pills. He and his wife supped together, and were sitting talking pleasantly with one another, when her three companions appeared. Nṛit'ōkālī introduced her husband to them, and told them all about him. They treated him with great courtesy and respect. Then the four girls, taking the Prince with them, went and climbed up the magical tree, which, being set in motion as before, travelled rapidly to the garden of Indra. All five repaired to the Court-assembly, and the four girls began to dance, the Prince playing their accompaniment. They danced very beautifully for a while, till, unluckily, Nṛit'ōkālī chanced to catch the Prince's eye, with the result that, through inattention to what she was doing, she danced a few steps out of time. Indra observed this, and at once became aware that a mortal man had been introduced into his assembly. In a fury of anger, he called Nṛit'ōkālī before him and said, "As a punishment for your impudent audacity in bringing a mortal into my assembly, you shall forthwith be born in the earth in the shape of a little bat." Nṛit'ōkālī began to weep bitterly, and entreated him to pardon her. At first, Indra was too angry to heed her prayers, but, at length, he relented and appointed a limit to the time she should be bound by the

curse ¹⁴ he had pronounced. He said, "When someone will break down the temple where you must abide in the form of a bat, plough the land on which it is built, plant rice and vegetables there, and, with these, feed

¹⁴ The degradation of a semi-divine being—male or female—to a lower form of existence by a curse, is a frequent incident in the KSS, and the cause is very often the same as in the case of Nṛit'ō-kālī. *E.g.*, when Indra was in Brahmā's court, one of his Apsaras—heavenly nymphs—Alambushā, and a Vasu—a kind of demi-god—Vidhūma, looked amorously at one another. Brahmā, greatly shocked, looked significantly at Indra, who forthwith inflicted on the pair the curse that they should become human—KSS, I, p. 52. Brahmā and Indra, in the rôle of Puritans, were Satan rebuking sin with a vengeance. The former must have forgotten about the wife of Atri, and the latter, about the wife of Gautama. See, also, KSS, I, pp. 238 f., and II, pp. 508 f.

The divine Mother, Nārāyaṇī, shows herself more disposed to make allowances. She forgives Chandrasvāmin and one of her slaves who have presumed to fall in love with one another in her presence, because they own up—*ib.*, I, p. 553. But, as a rule, the inflictor of the curse presently relents and fixes a limit to its duration. Sometimes, in Western tales, the limitation or modification of a curse is effected by some well-disposed person other than the person who has inflicted it, as in 'Little Briar-Rose,' GHT, I, pp. 197 f.

A Western case closely resembling those Indian ones of curses with predetermined limits, is that in No. VI. of the 'Children's Legends'—GHT, II, pp. 366 ff. The Lord condemns the uncharitable hermit to wander about begging, never staying longer than a night in any one place, till three green twigs sprout on a dry branch he carries with him.

The limit in Indian tales is often an, apparently, all but impossible coincidence of circumstances, as in the KSS case last cited, or the performance by somebody of some immensely difficult task—as in our story—but, at the fated time, everything comes about quite easily. That is just as well, as cursing is very rife and is equally unfailing of effect, whoever the curser may be. In KSS, II, p. 535 f., a hermit's pupil inflicts a curse on Muktāphalaketu and his companion, and it has to work itself out, though the hermit, himself, declares that his pupil is a fool and had acted under a complete misapprehension.

ten thousand Brahmans¹⁵—all this in a single night—then you will obtain deliverance, and be permitted to enter heaven again.” Saying this, he broke up the assembly. Nṛit’ókálí bade the Prince a sorrowful farewell, and immediately was changed into a little bat, which flew away out of sight.

The Prince was overwhelmed with grief, but what could he do? Returning to earth as he had come, he resolved that, unless he could deliver his wife, he should never go back to his home any more. So, quitting the city, he wandered on and on, without knowing or caring where. He traversed and left behind kingdom after kingdom, forest after forest. At length, he came to a little hut in the midst of a very thick jungle. Beside it, a Muni was practising austerities. The Prince remained there, tidying the hut and fetching from the forest such things as the Muni was likely to need, but taking the greatest care not to disturb him, as he was rapt in profound meditation. After some days, he awoke to ordinary consciousness, whereupon the Prince, putting his upper cloth over his shoulders, approached and stood before him in suppliant attitude. Looking up at him, the Muni said, “By my magical power, I have come to know who you are and why you have come here. Do not despair; your desire will be accomplished. Take these two things. The name of the one is Fastening-Rope and that of the other is Thick-Stick. They will do whatever you command them.”¹⁶

¹⁵ This seems a large order, but, in KSS, II, pp. 495 f., Matangadeva will give his daughter only to the man who feeds eighteen thousand Brahmans!

¹⁶ In ‘The Raja’s Son and the Princess Labám,’ one of the four articles which the Prince finds the four Fakírs quarrelling about,

The Prince joyfully received the gifts, made a humble obeisance to the Muni, and took his departure.

After walking some distance, he halted, and, placing the rope and the stick before him, he said, "Fastening-Rope and Thick-Stick, to whom do you now belong?" They answered, "Prince, formerly we were the Muni's; now we are yours."¹⁷ "Then take me to the place where the Kotwal's daughter is," said he. Instantly, they transported him to the temple Indra had spoken of. When the Prince saw the temple, he began looking carefully all about it, but it was some days before he found that there was, indeed, one little bat living in it. As soon as he caught sight of it, he said to Fastening-Rope and Thick-Stick, "Whose are you now?" "Formerly we were the Muni's; now we are yours," they replied. "Then," said he, "break down this temple, plough up this tract of land, plant rice and vegetables, and, with them, feed ten thousand Brahmans. And all must be done during this one night." He had hardly finished speaking, when Fastening-Rope and Thick-Stick demolished the temple, levelling it with

is a Rope and Stick which bind and beat—FOD, p. 191. 'Foolish Sachuli' gets the same as a gift from the five Fairies—SIF, p. 34. The Jackal gives a Binding-Rope and a Beating-Stick to the Brahman, which enables him to recover his magical jar—*ib.*, p. 156. It is usually in this rôle that the two articles, or the cudgel alone—as in GHT, I, pp. 143 ff.—or some other appliance which serves the same purpose—like the dance-compelling pipe, GOS, I, p. 207—figure. There is something decidedly incongruous in the first use which the Prince here makes of the rope and stick—they are employed in the same way in LDB, p. 121—and, also, afterwards, and the incongruity is all the more glaring that they are employed, too, in a strictly appropriate way.

¹⁷ This seems to have been a necessary magical formality. See No. XXVI, p. 259.

the ground. And, in a very short time, they had collected there all the peasants in that country with their ploughs. For Fastening-Rope, going to the people's houses, bound them, and Thick-Stick beat them, till they were only too glad to come, and do what they were bid. There were no less than a hundred thousand of them. So it was not long before the whole of the land was ploughed. Then Fastening-Rope and Thick-Stick sowed rice and vegetables, which sprang up and ripened almost instantaneously. Ten thousand Brahmans were gathered as quickly as the ploughmen had been, and Fastening-Rope and Thick-Stick feasted them with the rice and vegetables. As soon as they had done eating, the little bat was instantly re-transformed into a beautiful girl, who rushed joyfully into the Prince's arms. The long-parted husband and wife could find no words to express their feelings at meeting again. Then the Prince told Fastening-Rope and Thick-Stick to take them both away and set them down in their own country. His command was executed in a moment. Before they were aware of what was happening, he found himself with his wife in his father's palace. There they lived together long and happily.¹⁸

¹⁸ The latter half of this tale very closely resembles part of the story of 'The Rose of Bakāwali,' in CLER. Bakāwali is in the habit of going to the court of Indra in an aerial chariot to dance—p. 316. Indra is angry at her marriage with a mortal, and she has to be burned to ashes and resuscitated each night in order to lose the odour so contracted—pp. 316 f. At length, one night, her husband accompanies her unobserved—not, however, invisibly—and plays the accompaniment—pp. 318 f. Bakāwali, in consequence, dances so well that Indra presents her with his own collar, which she passes backwards to the musician—not knowing that

her husband had taken the usual player's place. Next morning, Tāj-ul-mulūk tells her about his having gone with her, and, in proof of his statement, shows her the collar. At night, he goes with her again. Indra, delighted with Bakāwali's dancing, promises her any boon she chooses—p. 319. She asks to be allowed to depart with Tāj-ul-mulūk. Indra grants this, as obliged by his promise, but inflicts on her the curse that, for twelve years, the lower half of her body should be of marble—p. 320. Fairies carry her away to Ceylon and place her in a temple there—pp. 321 f. They transport Tāj-ul-mulūk, also, thither, and he finds Bakāwali—p. 323.

XXVIII.

THE GOAT, THE TIGER, AND THE MONKEY.¹

ONCE on a time, some drovers were taking a herd of goats to the nearest city to sell them. On the way, a He-goat and a She-goat began to say to one another, "When they reach the town, they will sell us, and, whoever buys us, will kill and eat us. What are we to do? If we could only somehow escape, our lives would be saved. But, supposing we did manage to escape, where could we go? If we run back to the village, they'll catch us again, and it'll be all up with us. And, if we go to any other village, the people there will seize us, and either sell us, or, themselves, kill and eat us. It looks as if we were doomed, whatever we do." They thought the matter over in silence for a while, then the She-goat said, "Look here, brother. It won't do to go to any place where men dwell. Let us rather go to some forest." "As if we should be any safer there!" objected the He-goat. "Aren't the forests full of wild beasts? If we do as you say, we're certain to end in a bear's or a tiger's stomach." "Not a bit," she replied. "If we go to the forest, then, when danger threatens, there's at least a possibility of

¹ For variants of this story, see SIF, pp. 35 ff., with Note VIII, 2 on p. 258; FOD, pp. 303 ff.; LDB, pp. 257 ff.; CAS, pp. 45 ff. and 49 ff.; 'Sagas from the Far East,' pp. 204 and 380.

saving one's life by flight. But, if we go where men live, then death before long is a certainty." Her companion allowed himself to be persuaded, and they agreed to flee together to the forest.

Accordingly, that very night, whilst the drovers were asleep, the two slipped away from the herd, and stealthily made their way to the forest. Wandering on through it, they reached a place where it was very dense, and, seeing there a huge peepul-tree² with a big hollow in its trunk, they took up their abode in it. There they lived very happily, and, after a time, two or three little Kids were born.

One day, the two old Goats, with their Kids, were lying inside the hollow tree, when the young ones began to bleat loudly. Just then, a Tiger happened to be passing that way. Hearing the sound made by the Kids, he made straight for the tree. The Goats saw him approaching and were terribly alarmed. To escape by running away was impossible. It looked as if they and their Kids, too, were fated to end in a Tiger's stomach, after all, and that, within a very few minutes. No other resource being available, the He-goat resolved to try to bluff the Tiger. So, when he came within earshot, the Goat said loudly to the little Kids, "Why do you keep bothering me? Will your stomachs never be full? You've just had five tigers, three bears, two rhinoceroses, and six buffaloes. And yet you're still crying out for food. But hush! There's a Tiger coming. I'll kill him and fetch him to you to finish up with."³ Hearing

² Sk., *aśvattha*, the *Ficus religiosa*. See MWR, pp. 335 f. and No. VI, Note 42.

³ Cf. the bluffing of the Rākshasī in No. XXVI, p. 265; LDB,

this speech, the Tiger stopped short in the utmost consternation. "Well, I never!" thought he to himself. "What kind of animals can those be, and where can they have come from? The old one has just fed his children with five tigers, three bears, and I can't remember all what more, and now he'll give them myself to finish with, he says. Right-about's the word! I've gone much too near that tree already." Thus thinking, he turned about and began slowly to retreat. Seeing this, the Goat shouted still more loudly, "Will you not keep quiet, you little brats? Don't you see you're frightening the Tiger away? Can't you shut up till I've caught him and brought him in?" This was too much for the Tiger. In his panic, altogether forgetful of his dignity, he bounded away as fast as ever he could, never stopping till he could run no longer, and had to lie down, panting, at the foot of a tree.

In that tree dwelt a Hõnumān Monkey.⁴ Seeing the Tiger in such a bad way, he came down and said to him, "Brother Tiger, what makes you pant so?"

pp. 258 f.; and CAS, p. 44. In the story of 'The Jackal, the Barber, and the Brahman,' the jackal inside the dead bullock gulls the Mahars by pretending to be a saint and the god of their village—FOD, pp. 179 f.

⁴ Sk., *hanumān* = big-jawed, the name of the divine monkey-king who was Rāmachandra's ally in his war with Rāvaṇa—see No. XIX, Note 3. He was possessed of many remarkable endowments and attainments—among others, of a knowledge of the Śāstras rivalling that of Bṛihaspati, the preceptor of the gods—being especially proficient as a grammarian! In Bengal, *hõnumān* is used as a common noun to designate the very abundant big, grey, black-faced monkey, in the form of which the monkey-god is represented there, although the Rāmāyaṇa describes him as having been of the colour of molten gold, with a face as red as the brightest ruby. On Hindu monkey-worship, see MWR, pp. 326 ff,

As soon as he could speak, the Tiger replied, "Don't ask me about that, brother. Dear knows how much merit my father and grandfather must have accumulated.⁵ Thanks to it, I've escaped from a most terrible danger." "Bless me! What has happened?" said the Hõnumān. "Let me get my breath first, and I'll tell you all about it," was the reply. When he had somewhat recovered himself, the Tiger began his story. "Brother, some strange monster of an animal—I really don't know how to describe it—has come to this forest. At first, I thought it was only a goat, and, under that impression, was going up to it, to seize and eat it. Just then, its young ones had begun to whimper, and I heard it say to them, 'You brats! Will your stomachs never be full? I've given you five tigers, three bears, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, elephants'—I can't remember all what animals nor how many of them he mentioned—'and still you aren't satisfied. Is it stomachs or bottomless pits you've got inside of you?' Then, catching sight of me, he said, 'Ah! the very thing! Keep quiet for a minute, will you? There's another tiger coming. I'll kill him and fetch him in to you.' Brother, I didn't wait to hear any more, or I shouldn't be here. I bolted as hard as I could. But just think of it, brother! We tigers eat all other animals.

⁵ Merit and demerit being transferable. Cf. the often quoted saying that, if a worthy guest be treated inhospitably, he departs, taking with him all the fruit of the good deeds of the inhospitable man and leaving with the latter all the guilt of his own sins. See, also, Manu, III, 100. In KSS, II, p. 83, a tree-Yaksha asks two Brahmans to perform the Uposhana vow for one night and bestow the fruit of so doing on him to supplement his own incomplete performance.

An animal that eats us ! Did ever you hear of the like ? ” “ Bah ! ” replied the Hönumān scornfully, “ what a blockhead you are ! The Goat was terrified at the sight of you. All his big talk was the merest bluff. Come along. I’ll go back with you, and let you see the real state of the case.” “ Catch me go there again ! ” said the Tiger. “ But, if you’re tired of your life, you’re welcome to go by yourself.” “ Tut ! ” answered the Hönumān. “ There’s nothing to fear. Don’t be a fool. Come away.” But nothing he could say, would induce the Tiger to go. At last, the Hönumān proposed that the Tiger should go to show him the place, but, himself, remain at a safe distance. “ Oh, it’s easy for you to speak about safety,” retorted the Tiger. “ At the first appearance of danger, you’ll be up a tree with one jump—safe enough, I warrant you ; while I shall be left in the lurch at the mercy of the monster.” “ Well,” said the Hönumān, “ I’ll tell you what we’ll do. We’ll knot our tails together.” “ That’s not such a bad idea,” answered the Tiger. “ In that case, it won’t be so easy for you to bolt, leaving me behind.”

So they knotted their tails together and started towards the hollow peepul, the Tiger keeping as much in the rear as he could.⁶ As soon as they came within sight of the tree, the Tiger said, “ That’s the place. I’m not going a step farther.” The Goat, for its part, was greatly alarmed, when it saw not only

⁶ Like the Cat in the story of ‘ The Cat and the Dog ’—SIF, p. 16—or the first Bhūt, when his uncle insists on his going back with him to tackle the Barber—LDB, p. 260. The uncle-Bhūt plays the part of the monkey, and lets himself in for worse than his nephew.

the Tiger coming back, but a Hõnumān accompanying it. "Now, it's all up with us," it thought to itself. "I managed to fool that blockhead of a Tiger, but a Monkey's too clever to be tricked in that fashion. Now that the Tiger has got the Hõnumān to help him, we're as good as dead already." By this time, the two companions were almost close up to the tree. Then the Goat, at its wit's end, began to shout, "Oh ! Hono ! You good-for-nothing rascal ! Was it only one tiger I told you to bring ? D'ye mean to say it's taken you the whole day to decoy that solitary one here ?⁷ You scoundrel, I'll eat you along with him." Hearing this, the Tiger concluded that the Hõnumān was nothing but the strange monster's purveyor, and had tricked him into accompanying him, in order to deliver him up to his master. With this conviction, he began to struggle with all his might to get away, while the Hõnumān tried his hardest to go on, that the Tiger might see for himself there was really no danger. The knot that bound their tails together, was too well tied to slip. So the one pulled forward and the other pulled back, till, at last, the Tiger's tail came away. Immediately, he bounded off for all he was worth. The Hõnumān, looking behind him, and seeing the two tails, went jumping about in

⁷ Similarly, when the Tiger meets him, the Barber declares that he needs nineteen more, the King having ordered him to bring twenty—SIF, p. 35. And, when the Wrestler brings home the goat which is really a disguised demon, the Pundit, who perceives this, asks his friend why he has brought only one demon, when he himself daily eats twelve, his wife, three, and his children, one each—FOD, p. 303. Cf., also, GHT, II, pp. 70 ff., 302 and 333 ; KKT, p. 333 ; CLP, I, p. 145 ff., with Note on p. 147 ; Abbott, 'Macedonian Folklore,' p. 263.

every direction, in the effort to get rid of the extra one, which made him feel desperately awkward. Wherever he went, the other animals, seeing what a guy he looked, began to make fun of him, till he was glad to hide himself in the very thickest part of the forest. The two Goats, though exulting in their deliverance, decided that it would be advisable to look out for a safer dwelling, and so departed with their Kids.

APPENDIX.

Note 1, see p. 1.—Karmasūtra is, literally, the thread or cord of *Karma*. Karma, as a philosophical or theological term, signifies Fate, conceived as the inevitable results of previous acts, more especially, the results accruing in any given birth, *i.e.*, life, from the acts done in a former birth, or the relation of cause and effect subsisting between the latter and the former. This is no mere relation of antecedent and consequent—a person's acts in a former birth effectively and irresistibly determine his lot in a following one.

In this Tale, Karma is understood more specially as the absolute efficacy of the acts of a former birth in determining the kind, circumstances, and time of a person's *death* in the present one. Here above all—if there can be degrees of inevitableness—it is emphatically certain that “no man can escape his destiny.” Aesch., ‘Prom. Vinet.’ 518.

Note 2, see p. 8.—Undeniably, the remarks of the astrologer imply a modified doctrine of Karma. They assert plainly that man is, to a very considerable extent, “master of his fate,” and can battle to good purpose “with his evil star”—or, if sufficiently perverse, with his good one. Cf. CLP, pp. 24 ff. This is quite a common way of thinking among Hindus, and, consequently, it may be questioned whether the practical influence of Indian fatalism is bad. It interferes but little with a man's doing his own best within the limits of the possible, and it helps him, in the case of the inevitable and when the inevitable has become fact, to feel and display a resignation which Europeans might with advantage emulate.

But, however popular thought may vacillate, the

orthodox doctrine, undoubtedly, is that *Karmaphala*—the fruit of Karma—is unalterable and inevitable. To avoid what is prognosticated in one's nativity is absolutely unfeasible.

Indeed, it is a question whether the astrologer's exposition does not actually contradict the original drift of our Tale, which was probably something like this: The Brahman's horoscope had shown that he was fated to be impaled; the Kāyastha's, that he was to become a King. How, then, did it come about that the one was *not* impaled and the other did *not* become a King? Answer: The Brahman *was* impaled—he was staked through the sole of the foot, and that, surely, was just as much a “getting up on a stake” as having one thrust through his chest or between his shoulder-blades. The Kāyastha *did* become a King, *i.e.*, a very wealthy man; as we speak of a Silver King, a Cotton King, a Railway King, etc. In the same way, Monmouth did come to grief on the banks of “Rhine”—the Bussex *rhine* of Sedgemoor being as much a Rhine as the German one.

Note 3, see p. 98.—In many Folk-tales, the hair figures as the seat of the life, strength, and the like, or possessed of other peculiar virtue. In FOD, p. 69, Ramchundra, with two or three of the Rakshas's hairs, sets fire to the jungle and utterly consumes it along with the Rākshasī herself. Burning one of her hairs instantaneously summons a fairy—CLER, ‘Rose of Bakawali,’ pp. 268 and 275. In ‘The Seven-legged Beast,’ the tiger gives the Prince a tuft of her fur, on which being shown to the sun, she will at once appear—KKT, p. 3, with Note. One hair from the young Prince's head, falling into ‘Iron John's’ well, pollutes it—GHT, II, p. 195. Musalmans take a hair and, regarding it as one from the Prophet's beard, swear by it—KKT, p. 341, Note. In ‘Sagas from the Far East,’ p. 228, Gesser Khan produces a host of 100,000 men by pulling out one hair from his head. Hence, the importance of getting possession of some of the hair of any being possessed of remarkable powers of any kind. In ‘The Devil with Three Golden Hairs,’ the King insists that the Luck-

Child, if he is to retain his daughter, must bring him three golden hairs from the Devil's head—GHT, I, p. 122. Cf. SIF, Note 2 on pp. 268 ff. ; CAS, pp. 71 f. and 87 f. ; MCF, pp. 126 f., 145, 157, 211, 213, 343 ; Dibelius, 'Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus,' pp. 18 ff. The fancied healing efficacy of 'a hair of the dog that bit me'—see a Sicilian story, 'The Sexton's Nose,' cited in CLP, I, p. 299—is another instance of the same superstition. This supposed virtue of the hair is variously accounted for—by some, from the primitive assumption that the essence of the whole being resides in every one of his members and every part of each ; by others, from the apparently observed fact that the life and strength—*viz.*, the heat—of the sun does actually reside in his hair—*viz.*, his rays—and departs when he is shorn of them. See Stahn, 'Die Simson-Sage,' pp. 42 ff. ; Schmidt, 'Jona,' pp. 2 ff., 29, 35 f., 46 f., 49, 66 ff., 93 ff., 168 ; SIF, p. 240, Note 2.

Note 4, see p. 127.—In strict accuracy, the apparent re-animation of the supposed corpses of the Brahman and his wife should have been described as their being entered by *Vetālas*, *i.e.*, demons other than the deceased owners. See KSS, I, p. 74, Note. Properly speaking, a Bhūt is a *revenant*—a deceased person, whose corpse has been disposed of, after a shorter or a longer interval, may *become* a Bhūt and reappear as such, as Bhōgōban—see No. XIII—was averred to have done. But, popularly, the term is very loosely used. Distinct, again, from Vetāla-possession of a corpse—as when Devadatta summoned one into a dead body to help him, KSS, I, p. 231—is the entrance of a corpse by a living person, who passes out of his own body into the other, as Indradatta occupied the body of the dead King Nanda—KSS, I, p. 21—and the aged Vāmasoma, that of the youthful Devasoma—*ib.*, II, p. 353—an incident which Gautier has re-furbished in a novelette of modern life. Russian and Indian Folk-tales would appear to be pre-eminently distinguished by the rich variety of uncanny beings that figure in them. According to RRT, pp. 282 f., the Vetāla corresponds rather to the "homicidal corpse" than to the Vampire, the latter being rather a blood-

thirsty Bhūt. But Ralston's definition of Vampire on p. 309—cf. pp. 318 ff.—exactly fits the Vetāla. See 'The Shroud,' pp. 307 ff., and 'The Coffin-Lid,' pp. 309 ff. The 'Warlock' of p. 288 is a Bhūt, the demon who enters the dead witch's skin—p. 21—something very like a Vetāla.

Note 5, see p. 147.—'Kānai the Gardener' is the same story in all essentials as that which is to be found in KSS, II, pp. 111 f., except that, in the latter, the Bull of Śiva takes the place of Airāvata, and Buddhist monks, that of the villagers. Cf. *ib.*, p. 112—A fool has climbed a tree till the branch bends under his weight over a river. Presently, an elephant with its driver comes along. The mahout, as requested, seizes the man by the feet to take him down, but the elephant moves on. Both being left hanging, the first man suggests that the mahout sing a song in order to attract attention and bring help. The mahout sings so well that the other lets go the branch in order to applaud him, and both are drowned. Cf. KSS, II, p. 37 with Note; 'Hitop.' IV, 2d story; Panchatantra, I, 13th story—see Benfey, Panchatantra, I, pp. 239 ff., II, pp. 90 f. The tortoise, Kambugrīva, gets his two friends, the swans, Vikāṭa and Sankāṭa, to carry him with them to another tank, hanging on by his teeth to a stick, the ends of which they hold in their mouths as they fly. Irritated by people's remarks, he forgets the swans' caution that he must on no account speak, and so falls and is killed. This is the source—or, at least, the oldest form—of the other variants of the story. The *motif* reappears in many European tales of the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' type. See RRT, pp. 291 ff.; CLP, I, pp. 305, 324.

Note 6, see p. 220.—Magical cures of barrenness are very frequently referred to in Folk-tales; e.g., GHT, I, p. 333, where the Fisherman's wife is said to have given birth to the two Gold-Children, after eating two of the six pieces of the Gold-Fish. Some other Indian instances are the following. In the story of Udayana, King of Vatsa, the hermit Śaṇḍilya gives King Śātānīka a mixture of rice, milk, sugar, and spice, consecrated with mystic verses, for his Queen, and she bears a son—

KSS, I, p. 52. In the story of Devasmitá, a King offers a sacrifice of his son, and the smell of it causes all his one hundred and five wives to bear sons—*ib.*, I, p. 85. In the story of Śringabhujā, the hermit, Śrutavardhana, prepares an elixir from the flesh of a wild goat for King Vírabhujā's hundred wives. When it is given to them, the favourite Queen, Guṇavarā, chances to be absent. For her, another elixir is prepared from the inside of the goat's horns. All the hundred bear sons—*ib.*, I, p. 355. The chaplain of King Ugrabhaṭa celebrates a certain sacrifice and gives the oblation, purified with holy texts, to the two Queens to eat. Thereby, they become pregnant and bear two sons—*ib.*, II, p. 216. In LDB, mangoes procured by the help of a fakír are mentioned as curing barrenness—p. 117—also, drugs, likewise furnished by fakírs—pp. 1 and 187. In the last-mentioned case, the specific is for the production of twins, one of whom is to be given to the supplier of the cure—a condition often made in this connexion. See, also, KKT, pp. 130 and 416, with Note; SIF, pp. 41 and 91 f.; 'Sagas from the Far East,' p. 268. In the ground where the temple with Bakāwalī in it has been rased, a farmer sows mustard-seed. His wife eats food prepared with the oil made from the crop, and Bakāwalī is reborn of her—CLER pp. 335 f.

The furnishing of such cures is still a principal part of the business of wandering ascetics of a low class. I once visited a *Mela*—quasi-religious fair—held by a wealthy Zemindar family a few miles from Chandan-nagar. Its chief feature was an exhibition of a vast number of life-size clay figures representing the heroes at the *svayamvara* of Draupadí, groups of Rākshasas, etc., etc. Among them was the image of an ascetic, handing a specific of the kind referred to above to a woman who had brought her daughter to him. The girl was represented as a widow—a touch of truly Oriental humour, which seemed to be highly appreciated by the crowd. See MCF, pp. 410 ff., and, with respect to the theory that tales of magical birth derive their origin from a primeval myth about the fatherless creation of the Sun-God, Stahn, 'Simson-Sage,' pp. 49 ff.

Note 7, see p. 224.—"Impostor" hero or heroine episodes are very common in Folk-tales, especially the "Impostor" or "Substituted" bride figures with amazing frequency in Western stories. Indian instances are comparatively rare, though by no means unknown. Here are a few. In 'The B  l-Princess,' an ugly woman gets the Princess to exchange clothes with her and give her her jewels. She then pushes her into the water and takes her place beside the Prince. The Princess is changed, first, into a pink lotus, and, lastly, into a palace and garden, her two eyes becoming a *maina* and a parrot, from whose conversation the Prince learns how to recover his wife—SIF, pp. 143 ff. See, also, *ib.*, p. 165; KKT, pp. 445 ff.; KSS, II, pp. 160 ff., with Notes on pp. 162 and 165. Cf. a Western instance: In 'The White Bride and the Black One,' the King sends a carriage and a beautiful dress for the W.B., after seeing her portrait. As she is coming, her stepmother transfers the dress to her own daughter and pushes the W.B. into the river, where she becomes a duck, which goes swimming to the palace kitchen after the marriage of the King to the B.B., and asks about the latter. So she appears thrice. The third time, the King is on the watch and cuts her head off, when she instantly resumes her proper shape—GHT, II, pp. 189 ff. See also, *ib.*, I, pp. 49 f. and 58 f.; RRT, p. 184; and MCF, pp. 6, 114, 213, and 359 ff. The curious thing is that the origin of this very frequent incident of the supplanted bride, seems to be an impenetrable mystery.

Note 8, see p. 231.—It would really be hard to say what thing does not figure as a magical means of locomotion in some tale or other. Boots—GHT, II, p. 32—shoes—KSS, I, p. 14—a foot-ointment—*ib.*, II, p. 594, with Note—a horse that can go anywhere—GHT, II, p. 38—and, by a transition, easy for the fancy, at least, a saddle that carries the sitter wherever he pleases—*ib.*, II, p. 334—rings—*ib.*, II, pp. 31 and 338; FOD, p. 43—a cap—GHT, II, p. 348—a cloak—*ib.*, II, p. 410—are only a few samples from the multifarious list. It is curious that wings, such as those of D  dalus and Icarus, figure so rarely in Folk-tales as a means of trans-

port. I cannot recall a single Indian case of anybody's obtaining such appendages. In 'Panch-Phul Ranee,' the Raja seats himself on the outspread wings of two parrots, and so reaches the Ranee's country on the other side of the seven seas—FOD, p. 146. King Vikram translates his soul into the dead body of a parrot, and thus is enabled to fly about at will—*ib.*, p. 110. Again—KSS, I, p. 159—after slaying the treacherous ascetic, Prapanchabuddhi, he obtains the power of flying *simpliciter*. So, too, the witch, Hennana, transports herself like the wind, without the aid of any external means, even a broom-stick—CLER, p. 127. In KSS, I, p. 157, the companions of Queen Kuvalayávalí are said to have acquired this same faculty by the eating of human flesh. More nearly analogous to the performances of the flying tree in our stories, Nos. XXIV and XXVII, are those of the cow-house—KSS, I, p. 159—which the witch Kālarātri, by means of spells, causes to fly up and through the air and to descend wherever she pleases, and those of the bed in the story of 'The Princess Labám'—SIF, p. 156. Cf. the flying chariot—KSS, I, p. 386—the box, provided by Queen Bánú for Farrukhrúz, into which he enters and closes his eyes, and, next moment, opening them, finds himself at his destination—CLER, p. 161—and Solomon's carpet, on which the winds waft him and his army wherever he wishes to go—*ib.*, Note on p. 164. See MCF, pp. 218 f. and 221 ff.; CLP, I, pp. 75 ff.

Note 9, see p. 239.—The heroes of Indian tales, as we have seen—No. XXIV, Note 14, and No. XXVI, Note 34—are usually very much married. Rāmachandra is a remarkable exception. Taking a second wife—or, for that matter, any number of additional wives—implies no unfaithfulness to the first, or even inconstancy, on the part of an Indian Folk-tale husband—it would be hard to say what does—and it is expected that a virtuous and dutiful wife will welcome a new-comer. In the KSS, she almost always does so. Sūryaprabha marries seven wives on just as many consecutive days. By his magical science, he divides his body and lives with all simultaneously, but, in his real body, principally with the

daughter of the Daitya King, Prahāda—KSS, I, pp. 429 f. Naravāhanadatta possessed the same most convenient power of self-multiplication—KSS, II, p. 477. He must have needed it. On p. 459, we find him marrying five Vidyādhari princesses all at once, and, on p. 471, other five. This sort of thing was quite in the day's work with him. In KSS, I, pp. 451 f., there is an account of an amusing discussion of royal polygamy among the many wives of Sūryaprabha. One of them explains it by the varying qualities of lovely women and the consequent desire of Kings to experience all kinds of fascinations. Folk-tale ladies are astonishingly amenable. Gullālā Shah's co-wives live most amicably together. Indeed, Panj Phul helps him to obtain Number Four—KKT, pp. 466 with Note, and 483.

In 'The Rose of Bakāwalī,' we read that Tāj-ul-mulūk's three wives "spent their time in peace and mutual love and never had the least jealousy or rivalry between themselves." Bakāwalī "cut up rather rough" when Chitravat joined the group, but allowed herself to be appeased—CLER, pp. 315 and 332 f. In B. C. Chatterji's 'Sitaram,' the hero's wives are on the best of terms. But novels like his 'Vishavriksha'—'Poison-Tree'—and plays like 'Jamai-Barik'—'Barrack of Sons-in-law'—show polygamy in another light. See, also, FOD, Note to p. 93 on p. 324.

Note 10, see p. 247.—The most ancient recorded case of a horse gifted with human speech and able to aid its master with wise counsel is, of course, that of Achilles' Xanthus—IL. XIX, 403 ff. I subjoin several others, selected at random. The horse, Kaṭar, not only talks with the Prince, but possesses the power of changing himself into a donkey and his master into a poor, common-looking, ugly man—SIF, pp. 126 f. and 130 f. Not only does the horse, Falada, while alive, converse with its mistress, its head, after being cut off, still retains the same faculty—GHT, II, pp. 11 ff. 'Ferdinand the Faithful's' little white horse also speaks—*ib.*, II, pp. 155 ff. King Ādityasena, when he does not know his way, prostrates himself to his horse, and, addressing it as a god, begs it to take him by a right and pleasant

road, which it does—KSS, I, p. 30, with supplementary Note on p. 574. In KKT, p. 353, the *Zalgur*—apparently, another name for the *pakshirāja*—behaves almost precisely like Xanthus, weeping, and warning his master of the Minister's plot. Cf. *ib.*, pp. 313 f. and 317 ff. Princess Anna the Fair's horse, which Katoma breaks in for the Prince, speaks and obeys orders intelligently—RRT, pp. 243 ff. See, also, *ib.*, pp. 75 and 90 ff. Vanya's horse not only speaks, but gloriously transforms his master when he creeps in by one of its ears and out by the other—*ib.*, pp. 258 f. Cf. the horse, Kaṭar, above. See, also, CLP, I, p. 441; MCF, pp. 173 and 236.

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